TO 'ARMAGH'

who saw the value of
education for her children

Education
for
librarianship

*Decisions in organising a system of
professional education*

Peter G New
BA FLA MIRT

with specialist contributions from
D W Langridge, C D Needham, B L Redfern

Contents

Preface

THIS BOOK attempts to discuss the decisions which have to be made in establishing, organising and running a system of professional education for librarians. Its main emphasis is on the library school, that is, an institution with mainly full-time teachers teaching mainly full-time students. There is also a concentration on the basic professional qualification in librarianship, for this is the primary and major stage in establishing a system. Higher and lower levels usually follow later and fit into the scheme already set up. My book seeks to interest not only teachers of librarianship but the whole spectrum of the library profession, for professional education is the concern of all practitioners. Many take a direct part in teaching students, and the policy which brings schools of librarianship into being and influences their work is often formulated by the profession at large.

Countries with a highly developed library system will already have library schools, perhaps long established. The decisions considered here will, for the most part, have been taken already, but it is healthy that they should be re-examined. Judging by the experience in Britain, library schools are where they are, and to a large extent what they are, because of a variety of factors little to do with the specific educational needs of librarians. By contrast, some other countries are in a carte blanche situation, just about to set up a scheme of library education. Here many decisions must be made quickly: even if they are not irrevocable, they will be difficult to change later. I hope that this book may help in this process of decision making.

When this book was being planned it was necessary to take into account another book on education for librarians, Gerald Bramley's *World trends in library education* (London, Bingley, 1975; Hamden, Conn, Linnet). The first part of his book is a descriptive and comparative account of library education in various countries of the world. There is no clash with my intention here. The later chapters in Bramley do however cover much of the subject matter found in this volume, but the approach is quite different. Bramley reviews the literature and compares one view with another. I can claim no such scholarly method: I base my book upon eighteen years' experience of teaching librarianship. For example, in my comments on teaching methods (chapter seven), I record what I have found in practice, with no incursions into educational theory. The result may be somewhat quirky and uneven, but I hope of interest.

My teaching experience spans the decade of the 1960s in which education for librarianship transformed itself in Britain. At the end of this decade we had reached something very near the present situation: at the beginning there were no higher degrees or research in librarianship and the majority of librarians qualified by correspondence course or part-time study. Almost all courses were externally examined by the national professional association (ie by practising librarians as a part-time activity). During this time the school in which I work (the Polytechnic of North London) was the largest school of librarianship in Britain. The decade was one of rapid expansion as well as change (staff increased seven-fold in ten years) and as the largest we tended to hit waves of expansion and development problems before the other schools. We had to innovate and work out systems without any really relevant pattern to guide us. Staff meetings helped to thrash out policy and to keep it under constant (and vociferous) review. I hope that some of this debate is communicated in this book.

I must make it clear however that this book is very far *from being a case-study of the PNL school of librarianship.*

I have attempted to set out problems and their possible
solutions in a general way, calling on examples from as
wide a range of schools and countries as possible. One can-
not immerse oneself in teaching librarianship for eighteen
years and be unaware of what is happening in library educa-
tion generally. This wider awareness comes from reading,
conversations with colleagues and overseas students, and
more vividly from travelling. I hope therefore that the ma-
terial in this book is internationally applicable. This hope is
modified by the warning I give throughout the text that local
circumstances affect the possible solutions to problems,
create problems of their own, and sometimes prevent the
attainment of obviously desirable objectives.

I would like to thank all my colleagues at the PNL school,
not only for the snippets of information they have given me
over the years which are useful in this book. Our head,
Edward Dudley, has built up a first-rate staff, and to work
with such people is both a pleasure and a stimulus. More
particularly I thank Derek Langridge, Chris Needham and
Brian Redfern for contributing the specialist chapters on the
teaching of their subjects. Their style is somewhat different
from that of my own text, but I feel it wrong to make changes.

P G New
Harpenden
September 1977

Home or abroad?

IN A BOOK which examines the establishment and organisation of a system of professional education, it is appropriate that the first chapter should discuss a way in which the whole may be avoided—namely by sending students overseas to gain their education in librarianship.

This would be a natural, indeed almost unavoidable decision to make in the very early stages of library development in a country. While in a conceptual sense education for librarianship can be seen as fundamental to the practice of the profession, one would not expect to find any example of an indigenous professional education system being set up before libraries themselves are firmly founded. The reasons are:

1 If the need for libraries has been recognised only recently it is unlikely that the need for library education (one further remove from libraries themselves, so to speak) will yet be appreciated.

2 Because of this it is highly unlikely that the necessary resources (money, staff, accommodation, equipment) will be made available.

3 There will be little or no pool of experienced staff on which to draw for teachers.

4 There will be an insufficient number of potential students to ensure a continuing supply.

5 Libraries will not be well enough advanced to provide an adequate base for, and exemplification of, the theoretical studies.

10

So, obviously, the staff of libraries in newly developing countries will need to go abroad for their library education. But this practice should be questioned periodically to see if the conditions are now right to set up an indigenous system. For a time the advantages of *education* abroad may outweigh the drawbacks. The advantages are:

1 Instead of relying on a new institution, probably too small to be effective, and doubtless seriously inexperienced, a choice can be made between several well-established schools of librarianship. In the English-speaking world, for example, Great Britain, the USA, Australia, and Canada offer a large number to choose from.

2 In such a situation there is more prestige to be gained, in many developing countries, in obtaining a qualification from abroad than from a home source. The qualifying 'piece of paper' is vital, and certificates from some countries have a valued international currency.

3 Apart from being formally educated the student studying abroad has the chance to see the best library practice. This might, indeed, be more valuable than the qualification, although few students would say so. But it is worth mentioning that not all students go abroad for a qualification: they may go to visit libraries and librarians or to attach themselves to a library school for an individualised programme which does not result in a qualification.

4 A more general but very real benefit of travelling abroad for study is the international contact thus fostered. Such contacts are often kept up later in the student's career. Personal contact is far more effective than reading the library literature in building up a feeling of friendly cooperation and internationalism amongst librarians.

Despite the advantages of study abroad, those who study and those who teach are painfully aware of the difficulties which it presents. These might be summarised as unsuitability of course content and the inevitable handicaps which an overseas student has to overcome. Both lead to a high risk of failure. Most overseas students pass, but among the

total number of failures at a library school there is likely to be found a much greater number of overseas students than their proportion in any class would indicate.

It is clear that a curriculum intended for (say) British or American students and therefore based on practice in those countries will pose extra problems to students from elsewhere in the world. Reference may be made for instance, to the system of government, both national and local, or it may even be assumed that this is known. This, and many other examples (such as the educational pattern of the country) will be both irrelevant and confusing to the overseas student. Even where a topic is potentially relevant (eg computers in libraries), it may be so far outside the student's experience that it poses a study problem. For these reasons the foreigner may have his choice of options within courses severely limited, for he will be well advised to leave alone topics which call for a national background which he does not have. For example it must be exceedingly difficult to study successfully an option in children's literature when not only has one not read the books but one has not been brought up in the tradition to which the subject relates.

Courses taken abroad may be irrelevant for sins of omission as well as commission. Not only will parts be redundant because of their inappropriate national context, but topics of interest to the students own country may frequently be ignored. So one might find the student from the tropics required to have some knowledge of library heating, when his need is for information on air conditioning and storage of library materials in humid conditions. Most developing countries have a literacy problem: the developed countries, in which library schools are likely to be found, by and large do not, so this is a vital area where need and provision for the overseas student are not matched.

The very good student can of course adapt for himself the material he has learnt to the conditions in his own country. But not all students are of the highest standard: in many cases they have done extremely well in view of the

12

inadequate educational system at home. But unless he is in the top flight, the student studying abroad is likely to suffer from one or more handicaps which will impair his performance, perhaps to the point of failure.

The first handicap one thinks of, and it is an important one, is language difference. One would think this so obvious that it would be easy to guard against. But there is widespread misunderstanding—or self-delusion—about language competence and language requirements. A purely academic school knowledge of a language, or a picked-up smattering good enough to get by at shopping or at an airport just will not do. Surprisingly it is not appreciated that language ability of a high order is needed to follow a lecture in a foreign language which is given at a speed which makes no concession to foreigners. These lectures doubtless include idioms, jokes, and informal references to current affairs, and may, moreover, be delivered in a regional accent. What is perhaps more surprising is that in Britain we find that many students with a communications problem are from countries where English is a strong if not the dominant or official language. In other words, English 'as she is spoken' in India or West Africa is quite different from that spoken in Britain. It would be helpful if this were more widely known by potential students abroad: it might save them the embarrassment and humiliation of a quite unexpected failure in communication.

I cannot resist telling a true story to illustrate language difficulty. Some years ago I was teaching a small class of overseas students which included a man from a country where English was the dominant language. However he spoke with a strong accent, had an abrupt and clipped delivery and so was difficult to understand. He made some comment to me during the class but I could not distinguish what he was saying so I asked him to repeat it. He did and I still did not understand. Then began a series of repetitions while I advanced further and further towards him up the aisle between the desks. The embarrassment can be imagined, but having gone so far I had to pursue it to the very end. At the seventh

13

or eighth repetition, when my ear was virtually at his lips, I at last understood what the poor man was saying. It was 'All I said was, "I beg your pardon?" '

Language, then, is a most serious problem, but it is, in a sense, superficial. By this I mean that in some cases it is possible to detect a good mind at work beneath the imperfections of English or whatever language, foreign to the student, is used for teaching and assessment. Provided the teacher is convinced that the student understands and can think soundly faults in language might be discounted. On the other hand they might not: the view might be taken that all students must pay attention to accuracy and elegance of expression, whether native-born or foreign. This view might however be thought harsh when applied to students who after their studies will go back to their own countries where the language problem will disappear again. In any event it must be emphasised that no 'benefit of the doubt' can be given. For example a blank or totally obscure answer cannot be condoned or marked up on the ground that it would have been better had there been no language difficulty. There is no proof that it would be: beneath the language problem there may be a dull mind, not an intelligent one. Therefore overseas students should be warned against expecting an automatic allowance of mercy merely because they are from another country and lack facility with the language of instruction. To allow this would mean dual standards: a higher level for home students, a lower one for those from overseas. This would doubtless not be permitted by the universities or other authorities awarding the qualification, and furthermore would make less valid the choice of the student who goes overseas to qualify because of the high level and prestige of that qualification.

The overseas student has to contend with other difficulties, although they are sometimes wrongly assumed to be merely part of the language problem. Language fluency could be perfect and yet the student might have a hard time studying abroad because the methods of study on which he had been

14

reared at home are inappropriate. This affects some of the newly developing countries in the English speaking world. Here education appears to be still stuck in a Victorian mould: there is heavy dependence on textbooks, facts and received opinion. While there is nothing wrong with this in itself, the student from such a context is unprepared and bewildered if he is called upon to compare, evaluate or analyse, or to produce his own original opinion. I remember lecturing to a group of overseas students on methods of book issue in libraries; I was using the common British analytical approach of considering with examples the factors important in making a selection of method—not evaluating the methods one by one, but giving the students the equipment to make a good choice in whatever circumstances they found themselves. The class listened attentively and assiduously took notes. At the end I called for questions. The first one was 'But Mr New, what is the *best* method?'

Differing habits of study may also result in an unfamiliarity with certain techniques such as audio-visual aids, and seminar and tutorial teaching as opposed to the formal lecture. In some countries the student/teacher relationship is much more formal than it is in say, Britain or the USA; this may lead to a difficulty in accepting the give-and-take in small group teaching or in challenging the word of a teacher, however provocative or ill-founded.

One can, indeed, go further and point to student difficulties which arise not from different methods of study but from a different way of life. For example, it is considered proper in some countries for women to be reticent and submissive in manner. I have had the unhappy experience of seeing students of this type fail their courses in Britain, partly because they were temperamentally unable to take advantage of student-centred teaching, and partly because their inbred reticence inhibited them from seeking the help from teachers which they so badly needed. I am perhaps on dangerous ground in referring to national characteristics, but without identifying any countries concerned it is possible to say that some peoples

15

are naturally active and others follow a more relaxed mode of life. Sometimes two races within a single country exemplify the different types: each may react differently to the altered tempo of study abroad and jealousies may be fostered.

To this long catalogue of the overseas student's study difficulties must be added the general problems of being away from one's own country. There is often a big climatic difference between the home and study country, and the health of a few overseas students never becomes fully adjusted to the change. Simple homesickness can affect people of any age, and all overseas students will suffer from the temporary loss of friends, relations and a familiar way of life. Married students usually come to study without their spouses. Living in a strange country can be very confusing and very lonely: all the more so if one is in a large city such as London, and indeed this may be an argument in favour of the overseas student attending a school of librarianship in a small town, especially if it has residential accommodation. This 'protected' environment is a comfort to the bewildered student, particularly in the early stages of his studies, and will be a safeguard against the small risk of racial discrimination.

Failure is a tragedy for any student, but doubly so for one from overseas. He usually must return home after his course and any repetition of failed examinations in his own country is difficult, if not impossible. In any event tutorial guidance would be difficult to obtain. The humiliation and loss of face (particularly important in some countries) involved in returning home without the qualification sought is immense. It is to be expected that one consequence of failure would be that the returning student does not get the post for which he was intended when qualified, but sometimes, in fact, he loses his library position altogether. Some employing authorities seemingly do not understand the difficulties of studying abroad. An extra painful twist is given when a senior member of a library system fails to qualify abroad, only to find that his subordinate has little difficulty on the same course in a later year!

The risk of failure examined at some length in this chapter prompts one to query why library schools do not decline to take students who are unlikely to succeed. After all, attempts are usually made to do this with home applicants. Better, many think, to eliminate the doubtfuls at the selection stage and expect a high pass percentage in the final assessments. The reverse—a free-for-all entry and a low pass rate—wastes the time of both staff and students (see chapter six on admission of students generally). But of course overseas applicants pose extra problems in selection because they cannot be seen by the school before a decision is made on acceptance. However careful the selection techniques, they cannot be fully successful. Language tests can be set but they do not indicate ability to follow an idiomatic spoken foreign language. Much reliance must therefore be placed on reports from senior librarians, teachers etc, but the drawback here is twofold. Firstly there is the worldwide tendency to describe one's geese as swans and to exclude adverse comment. Secondly the writer may well be out of touch with the requirements and standards of the country and library school to which the student hopes to go. Thus he may be ignorant of the study methods to be employed, may underestimate the standard of study expected of the student (this frequently is done), or mis-judge language proficiency. This last is indeed almost inevitable when there are variants of an international language in different countries of the world. Even the expatriate librarian who originates from the country of the library school may easily give a false judgement; it may have been a long time since he left, and his mind and ear soon become attuned to local habit and speech.

The gloom pervading this chapter must not go unrelieved. I repeat that most overseas students pass examinations, and the great majority do surprisingly well in view of their inherent difficulties. A few are brilliant by any standards. I remember teaching two highly intelligent young men from Hong Kong a few years ago—they were in the top five per cent of our ability range. Overseas students at this level turn their

'foreignness' to advantage, for they can be comparative at every turn, to the benefit of their studies. The capability is there to exploit fruitfully the clash in culture, educational standards, and professional practice between home and study country.

If one has any doubts about standards one should have the pleasure of visiting ex-students in their own country: here, in their proper context, with suitable climate and working conditions, a confidence and competence is shown which may not always have been in evidence on the course. And if one is ever in doubt about the value of educating overseas librarians one should reflect that so often they go back to positions of great seniority in their own countries (eg University Librarian, National Librarian). They are some of the best people from their country: they need to be, because their responsibilities will grow as their embryonic library service develops.

The balance of the argument in this chapter clearly indicates that a country will find advantage in setting up its own system of professional education as soon as it is able to do so. The crucial point open to debate is, when is the right moment to take this step? As I have already said, the following criteria must be fulfilled in order to go ahead:

1 Financial support for the establishment of a full-time library school or other system of professional education. This would be for staff, accommodation, equipment etc and might come from the government or possibly an international agency.

2 Libraries should be sufficiently advanced to assure a continuing flow of students. If full-time study is envisaged, a system of grants or scholarships for student support will be needed.

3 There must be the possibility of recruiting sufficient teachers of adequate quality.

It is at this stage that the developed countries can help the developing. By advice and assistance in staffing a new library education system *can be helped to help itself. This is far*

18

better than continuing longer than necessary to send students abroad for an irrelevant qualification which they will have difficulty in obtaining. That is the principal message of this chapter.

Help might be given to countries in this situation in the following ways:

1 Advice could be offered on setting up a school of librarianship or other library education system, and in devising syllabuses etc.

2 Staff from established schools of librarianship in developed countries could go out to help in the teaching, at least in the early stages. The larger schools of librarianship in Britain have done this on a fairly regular basis.

3 Teachers or potential teachers from the developing country could be seconded to an existing and experienced library school to learn about teaching librarianship. Again, some British schools of librarianship operate this system, either offering formal courses or informal attachments.

Finally, it is necessary to point out the danger of relying too heavily on the advice of the developed country. There should be local librarians and educators with enough experience and confidence to resist recommendations which are inappropriate to local conditions. This, then, is an argument for not embarking on a system of library education at too early a stage. If advice from outside is accepted uncritically we shall have repetitions of the situation existing in one country where one library school follows the British pattern, one the American, neither fully appropriately. I have already mentioned the special factors which may obtain in developing countries such as illiteracy, an oral rather than a literary culture, a multiplicity of languages, and a total lack of bibliography. The new library education system must make its plans in the light of these conditions.

Modes of study

THIS FORMIDABLE chapter heading means no more than that I am to discuss correspondence tuition, and part-time and full-time study.

Since a sharp change in 1964, when a new syllabus was introduced by the (UK) Library Association, the British pattern of education for librarianship has been dominated by full-time study for first qualifications. No correspondence courses now exist, and part-time study occupies a minority place, although, as will be noted later, new courses and financial pressures are causing a revival. In contrast, before 1964 most people qualified by part-time study and correspondence courses.

There is no reason why a country developing its library education system should follow the same pattern. Indeed as in all matters, library and non-library, the developing world can rapidly learn the lessons of the developed countries without undergoing the same lengthy and sometimes painful experience of trial and error. So a scheme of full-time library education could be established at once if conditions are right: there is no doubt that the balance of educational pro and con is with the full-time school of librarianship. But on the other hand it could be a sound decision in some countries to base professional education, at least partially, on correspondence courses or part-time study. This decision is likely to be dictated by geographical, financial, or other conditions rather than educational advantage. All this is to say that any system of professional

education which is set up must suit the circumstances of the country concerned and must not follow slavishly the models in other countries even when real educational merit can be seen.

Correspondence tuition has become discredited as a method of study because so many professions have progressed to part-time classes and full-time education. With this has often come an upward shift in pitch, so that the emphasis has moved not only to full-time courses, but courses leading to a degree. It can however be demonstrated that correspondence tuition is capable of being a viable modern teaching system at high level. Examples are the (UK) Open University, which does not offer courses in librarianship, and the long-established University of South Africa, which does. Both are exclusively correspondence teaching institutions. In fact UNISA has a far larger number of librarianship staff (twelve) and students than any of the other schools of librarianship in South Africa.

It is not easy to study by correspondence. Human nature being what it is, it is tempting to postpone reading, or writing some essay or assignment when other pressures obtrude on one's time. Study must be done with the remnant of energies left over from ordinary day-to-day work, and therefore to be successful the student needs much self-discipline. The non-completion rate of correspondence courses is high, not only because of these difficulties, but because the whole programme is necessarily very long and the circumstances of the student's life may so change (because of marriage, a different job etc) that he cannot keep up the study. In such a long period of learning particularly, the student does need contact with and feedback from teachers: this is difficult to achieve, but not impossible, in correspondence tuition. What is much more difficult is to give the stimulus which high quality personal teaching usually provides. The better correspondence teaching institutions have ways, examined below, of supplementing the basic course notes, but even so, it must be a rare student who does not become bored at some stage in his long haul to qualifications.

21

Nevertheless, correspondence courses suit some people. Provided the self discipline is there to ensure that work is submitted on time, the student has some freedom to study as he wishes and when he wishes. The oft quoted advantage of 'studying in your own armchair' is not to be discounted: many might prefer this to the effort of travelling to attend a part-time course where the lectures may be incompetent or pitched too high or too low, thus wasting the student's time. Moreover, no salary need be sacrificed as in full-time study.

It is possible, therefore, that a few people who are well able to work on their own might prefer correspondence course tuition even if alternatives were available. But the main reason for instituting this kind of study is that the other methods are not feasible. The overwhelming advantage of correspondence tuition is that it is available to everyone who can be reached by the postal services, while geographical or financial restrictions apply to part-time and full-time study. A country with a widely scattered population might well set up a high level augmented system of qualification by correspondence as a substitute for part-time study. This might supplement full-time schools of librarianship if they exist, or might stand in their place until they are established.

By an augmented system of qualification by correspondence I mean provision which extends beyond sending basic course notes. For instance, the Open University has television time allotted to it. My other example UNISA does not use TV because a television service has only recently been inaugurated in South Africa. Failing television, other audiovisual material can be employed to enliven and supplement the teaching. So tapes, slides and photographs could be sent; the photographs could include facsimile documents. UNISA has for some years been operating a pilot project of using microfiches to overcome the problems of acquiring multiple copies of textbooks and sending them to distant students. By all these means the student could be stimulated and the boredom of isolated study relieved. Further valuable stimulus

and feedback would come from some personal contact with teaching staff, however small. This might be done by short periods of full-time study (a week's summer school for example), by a system of regional tutors positioned throughout the country, or by the staff of the teaching institutions taking as part of their duties the need to travel extensively to visit students.

Part-time study may be run by a teaching institution as a substitute for full-time education or as a supplement to it. In the former case the class consists entirely of part-time students: the timetable takes this into account so that teaching is arranged compactly within convenient periods of attendance. The syllabus could be quite different from that followed by full-time students if there are any in that institution or country. The second, supplementary kind of part-time study occurs when a school of librarianship opens its full-time courses to the occasional part-time student. Thus a one year course may be taken on a part-time basis over two years, with the student selecting half the subjects to attend in the first year, half in the second. The difficulty for the student here is that he is treated as an odd man out: his timetable may be very inconvenient, for example, requiring several short attendances per week, since the interests of the full-time students will predominate in the construction of the timetable.

As in the case of correspondence tuition, educational advantage may be claimed for part-time study, but the arguments are thinner than they may at first appear. Of course going to part-time classes should be more effective than studying by correspondence because the benefits of personal contact with a teacher are available—stimulus, question and answer, feedback on performance—all provided the teacher is adequate for his task. But it is claimed that part-time study has a major advantage compared with full-time classes, namely that there is an integration of theory and practice resulting from the student undertaking work and study at the same time.

23

I cannot deny that if study and relevant practice go hand in hand one helps the other and education is placed in a context of reality. The fault in the argument is that only rarely is there any correspondence between day to day work and the studies being undertaken at that time. For example I remember studying advanced bibliography at evening classes (precise and lengthy definitions of *edition, impression, issue* and *state* spring to mind) while my job during the day was to run single handed a branch public library. I do not regret the information I received, but my daily work did not help me learn it. Perhaps it is in the area of library management that most contacts between theoretical teaching and daily practice will occur, but even here we should remember that the student is normally studying material relevant to a position higher than the one he is holding (indeed that is the whole point of studying to qualify). And some studies in librarianship (history of libraries for example) do not claim to have any direct relationship with day-to-day work.

The educational drawbacks of part-time study need not be laboured: they have been mentioned already when correspondence courses were considered, ie the student has to offer to his studies only those energies left over after he has carried out his full-time job. Apart from attending lectures he must take from his leisure period enough time to read, and to write essays and do other work required by the teacher.

The greatest educational disadvantage obtains when part-time classes are held exclusively in the evenings. Here it is likely that both teacher and taught come together after a full day's work and in a mood to relax rather than concentrate. Obviously it is far better in this respect to have classes during the day, but for this to be feasible employers must be willing to lose some of their staff (teachers and students) during the day. This day release might be impossible in small libraries but on the other hand it could be encouraged as part of the national education policy.

We have seen that the part-time student at least has the advantage of learning from a live teacher rather than from

24

a set of course notes, but the amount of the benefit will depend on the quality of the teacher. Teachers may be good and bad in any kind of teaching, but (admittedly a sweeping generalisation) part-time teachers of part-time students are likely to be less expert than full-time teachers. They too will be tired if teaching is an addition to their normal duties: they are unlikely to have the time to think about their subject adequately or to experiment with the best ways of teaching it. It is much to their credit that some part-time teachers do spend long hours in conscientious marking of students' work, in making visual aids and otherwise carefully preparing for lessons.

I am here referring to part-time teachers of part-time students for the two are often found in combination outside the full-time schools of librarianship. But the exclusively part-time teaching centre should not rely on part-time teachers alone; even in the smallest the teacher-in-charge should be full-time. The reason is not only that of greater expertise. The disadvantages of using part-time teachers in any teaching situation are discussed in chapter five, but let it be said briefly here that there is an inevitable non-teaching load to be shouldered and this cannot be done by part-time staff. I refer to such matters as timetabling, accommodation, equipment, staff and student reports, welfare of students, and a host of minor administrative chores.

As we saw when considering correspondence courses it is not educational pro and con which determines whether or not a particular mode of education is introduced. The determining factors are the external constraints of geography and finance. Geographical constraint is obvious. To be viable a part-time teaching centre must be able to draw from a hinterland in which there is a continuing sufficiency of potential students within reach by daily travel (remembering that librarianship is a minority subject compared with others). In other words, part-time study suits densely populated areas with good communications. The thinly-peopled country might well have full-time schools, but the supplement could be correspondence teaching rather than part-time tuition.

25

The financial constraint is also self-evident if no finance is available to establish full-time schools or to support students by grants or scholarships. But even when grants are available they are rarely of a level which compares with a salary. So a potential student, especially one with heavy commitments, may be forced to take the part-time alternative to full-time study. The current unemployment in many countries is increasing the pressure to continue or increase part-time provision, for it is a very serious step to relinquish a library post for a full-time course, perhaps to find that no job is available afterwards.

Whatever the position obtaining for first qualification courses (and it is unlikely that the trend here towards full-time courses will be reversed) part-time study has an importance at other levels, for example technician training and higher and research degrees. As these activities are themselves increasing, the future of part-time study seems assured.

Full-time study although of the greatest importance, need not take up much space here because the pro and con is merely the obverse of what has been said about correspondence and part-time study. Also most of this book either assumes a full-time education system or applies more naturally to that situation. In short, in educational terms, full-time study is the norm, the target. If one is obliged to set up other systems of library education, it is no more than making a virtue out of necessity.

Since we have referred to these factors before, when treating other modes of study, we need only enumerate briefly the prerequisites for establishing full-time schools of librarianship:

1 *Availability of staff* It is unlikely that there will be a pool of potential lecturers to draw upon until libraries themselves have reached a fair stage of development.

2 *Availability of students* Again, libraries must have developed sufficiently to ensure a continuing and fairly even flow of students for the forseeable future. Obviously there will be a backlog to clear when the school opens, but what will be the demand after this is done? Predictions of future

student numbers are notoriously unreliable, but it is wise to err on the side of underestimation. If numbers are more than predicted expansion is usually possible. But if numbers do not reach the planned figure theo even at best there may be painful contraction and redundancy. At worst the worst school ceases to be viable and closes down. Clearly there is more disruption involved in the cessation of a full-time school than of part-time classes or correspondence courses.

3 *Resources for the school* This means both the initial accommodation and equipment or the finance to acquire them, and the running expenses of staff salaries, materials and maintenance. Local politics may indicate the best guarantee of continuing funds; to have the library school independent of any other institutions and with a direct grant from the government or to be within a university, college, or large library (See chapter four).

4 *Finance for students* If students are to attend a library school full-time, they must have the finance to pay any fees charged and to support themselves. A few can pay from their own pocket but most will look for some form of help, and indeed, unless it is provided, the flow of full-time students may dry up. Help may take the form of leave-with-salary from the employing library, or grants from central or local government. Loans are another possibility. The practice of working one's way through college (i.e. taking a part-time menial job concurrently with being a full-time student) is possible only if a) rates of pay for these casual jobs are reasonably high, so that a fair amount is earned by a few hours work; and b) the academic programme is not so intensive that 'spare time' work is impossible.

The sandwich course may be considered as a special form of full-time course. It is in essence a full-time course extended beyond its normal length by a long period (often a year) or periods of practical work in libraries. Against the disadvantage of the extra duration may be set the hoped for advantage of mutually supportive theory and practice. The value of fieldwork in general is examined in chapter seven.

These forms of education (full-time, sandwich, part-time and correspondence) are not mutually exclusive; two or three can exist side by side. But with a finite demand, the provision of one will affect the need for another. In particular, if part-time and correspondence tuition is available, grant giving authorities may be reluctant to provide finance for full-time study. When the Library Association brought in a new syllabus in 1964, correspondence courses ceased and part-time classes were discouraged. In this way students and grant authorities were persuaded that full-time study was virtually the only road to qualification. Now that this battle is won in Britain with full-time study accepted as the norm, part-time study can be re-introduced without damage to this principle. So while few *qualify* by part-time study, second qualifications taken in mid-career for example are gained by part-time study so avoiding the break in earnings which a full-time course would bring.

Level and pitch of courses

IN THE LAST chapter I made the distinction between first and second qualifications. The full range of possible levels of study in librarianship could be contained under the following heads (I give the various names by which similar courses are known):

1 non-professional, sub-professional or technician's qualification

2 professional qualification

3 'continuing education' *education permanente*, refresher courses, short courses

4 higher qualifications (taught courses)

5 research and research degrees.

This list could be expanded; certainly some sections could be subdivided (for example professional qualification could be at more than one level, or differing according to the type of library prepared for).

Before visiting Nigeria in 1976 I read some articles about education for librarianship in that country, and I was surprised at the multi-level structure described: it seemed elaborate for a country with much library development ahead of it. When I queried this in Nigeria I was told that the structure reflected the various salary grades within the Nigerian public service. At the end of this chapter I shall refer again to the powerful influence of the local context. In many aspects of education for librarianship decisions are affected less by any national or international librarianship standards or consensus, and more by what is possible, or what is accepted, in the local circumstances.

In the last chapter we examined the different modes of study—full-time, part-time, and by correspondence. All these methods can apply to all the levels enumerated above, although local factors may impose modifications. (For example I have already said that part-time study cannot flourish in a scattered population with poor communications.) It is likely however that the professional qualification level is the first to adopt the full-time mode. The technician training could be full-time, but a lack of grants and the need for close liaison with practice would indicate part-time study or 'training on the job'. Refresher courses could be part-time but could also be short duration full-time courses and need not be held in library schools. 'On site' courses in libraries may be more appropriate, particularly if the courses are of a management, problem-solving kind. Again, higher qualifications and research could be full-time or part-time. Where favourable conditions obtain, the latter may predominate, for it avoids a break in mid-career, which may mean loss of job, loss of security, and of course, loss of income.

The various levels of study listed above are probably self-explanatory, but the technician level perhaps warrants a little more comment. Different things are implied to different people in this area of library education and the confusion is both international and national. For example, librarians in the USA tend to regard the British two year full-time non-graduate course (now dying) as at technician's level, which is incorrect; it is a full time professional qualification. But it is understandably difficult to accept this in a country where all professional librarians have a degree. The national confusion in Britain showed itself when the Library Assistants' Certificate was introduced. Public librarians, generally speaking, saw this certificate as a means of rewarding their competent and long-serving non-professional (or library clerk) staff by enabling them to claim 'merit increments' on their salary scales. Many academic librarians, on the other hand, saw the certificate as a *sub*-professional rather than a *non*-professional qualification. They wished to fill the gap

30

once filled by intelligent junior staff (often graduates) who were undertaking sub-professional work in their libraries while studying part-time for a full professional qualification. Now that the professional qualification is almost always taken by full-time study in Britain, this supply of high level juniors (cheap labour?) has virtually dried up.

The danger of confusion of levels is at its greatest in this area of sub- and non-professional qualification. Proposals are now being made in Britain for multi-level Library Assistants' Certificates, and this may make the confusion worse. Employers who wish to cut costs may well be tempted to employ qualified library technicians when they should have fully qualified librarians. With too many levels too close to each other, the difference between them is not obvious. The onus is on librarians to make a clearly understandable structure; if they do not the ignorance and self-interest of employers will combine to the disadvantage of staffing in libraries.

Where the profession is fully graduate [ie where full qualification as a librarian can be obtained only on a first degree or postgraduate course] the distinction between librarian and technician can be clearly established. This situation is being achieved in Britain with the demise of the two year non-graduate qualifying course. But some librarians here are worried by the appearance of the now wider gap between qualified librarian and technician; this is why new, higher level technicians' certificates are proposed. The other, more reasonable, cause for concern is that the modern trend towards higher levels of qualification denies the possibility of advancement to the professional ranks of those who, perhaps through no fault of their own, do not have the necessary *educational* prerequisites. Thus if the professional qualification is postgraduate, those without degrees are barred from becoming qualified librarians. Self development is therefore frustrated, and the profession loses some good potential senior librarians. It would be widely agreed that whatever the pre-entry level for qualification, there are always to be found a number of people who are suited to embark on a

qualification course in every way save one—namely that they lack the necessary educational level. Some mishap in their schooling or early life may have been the cause of their educational shortfall. It is not enough to meet this situation by requiring such people to acquire the necessary educational level by their own efforts (eg by reading for a degree in their spare time). This is not always easy or possible: it calls for quite exceptional determination. Instead the professional qualification structure might be made flexible enough to admit them. This is the principle of the 'ladder of entry' to the profession, where one may enter at a step appropriate to the educational standard achieved. This is the view taken by the Department of Education and Science, which for this reason is reluctant to see the end of the non-graduate library qualification in Britain. The 'ladder' approach might for example mean in practice that there are various levels of entry to a technician's qualification (with differing courses for each) and the certified technician would gain the special facility of entry to a course to full professional qualification (eg a BA degree course) whether or not he possesses the usual educational prerequisites. New proposals from the Library Association, appearing after this section was written, advocate exactly this.

Of course the problem, and the need for a 'ladder' would not arise if all courses were open to all comers whatever the standard of their previous education. But this is rarely the case, for such an open policy would lead to much wasted effort on the part of teachers, and on the part of students who fail. The whole point of educational prerequisites is to prevent people of too low a level attempting what is beyond them. It is therefore most important that any 'ladder' policy is understood to be a way in which *exceptional* people may rise through the qualification structure despite the handicaps in their general education. This narrow minority route must never be thought of as the broad highway, for if that became the case all technicians would have expectations of a full professional qualification, and they themselves would

32

be recruited with this in mind. By this means we would be back to the bad old days when there was little differentiation between professional and clerical staff, and where, in the quest for qualified librarian status (expected of everyone) young people would blight years of their life in study for which only some of them were equipped.

A few words need to be said on the pitch of the system of qualifications, whatever differing levels it contains. By 'pitch' I mean a position on an educational scale which enables comparisons between different systems or countries to be made. The easiest level to examine is that of the first full professional qualification, for the other levels (technicians, advanced qualifications, etc) are usually determined by reference to it. Put in specific terms the question at issue is this: should the first qualification level be sub-degree, first degree, or higher degree? It is obvious at once that there can be no general world-wide answer to this question, for no country can set up a system of education for librarianship which is at variance with the general educational framework of that country. (Attempts at establishing international standards for schools of librarianship inevitably meet this difficulty.) One should therefore aim for a high but realistic place within the context of one's own country; one would not expect masters' degrees as a first qualification in countries where first degrees take five years or more of study. Even where agreement on a 'graduate profession' is possible (eg between North America and the evolving situation in Britain) there is still ample scope for confusion, for there is no common 'degree standard'. Degrees mean different things in different countries. They vary in their depth, breadth, and availability.

Since first qualification courses may be pitched at sub-degree, degree, or post-graduate standard, little can be said about the desirable duration of courses. Naturally the length will depend on the accepted span of the level of course chosen in the country concerned. Thus a first degree usually lasts for three years in Britain, and allows for more than the minimum education strictly in terms of librarianship principles

and procedures. Some element of education *for* librarianship in addition to education *in* librarianship may also be possible —a concept which is expanded in chapter eleven. Duration causes a problem mainly in postgraduate courses, for they are commonly restricted to one year, making it difficult to include enough of the essential material without making courses very intensive. Canada now has two year postgraduate qualifying courses, but elsewhere, for example in Britain, there is little hope at present of an expansion to two years. Recruitment to librarianship would suffer in comparison with other professions which have one year postgraduate qualifying courses (teaching for example) and the extension of student grants to two years is out of the question in the current economic climate. Luckily we find in Britain that the quality of postgraduate students is so high that they can make a success of the necessarily intensive one year course.

In Britain and in many other countries the academic year runs from October to June, with a long vacation (summer vacation in the northern hemisphere) running from July to September. When planning one year courses in particular some consideration could be given to running from January to December instead. The Polytechnic of North London and a few other British schools do this; and although it leads to some administrative inconveniences (the course being out of phase with other courses in the school or institution which run from October to June) there is the advantage to the student of a longer span between the beginning and the end of his studies—twelve months instead of nine. Of course the amount of teaching time is the same, but the greater time between beginning and end allows for more absorption and reflection—particularly important in an intensive one year course. Admittedly the student must keep himself for this longer time, probably on a small grant, but he could boost his income a little by taking up paid work during part of the long vacation. The long vacation itself, a big break in the sequence of formal study, can be seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is a time, sorely needed in a crowded

course, when assigned work can be done and where the student may catch up with reading impossible to do during the term because of lack of time or lack of access to books (too many students chasing too few copies in the library). On the other hand, some teachers claim that the long summer break disrupts the rhythm of study so that students are reluctant to take up the strain again in October. Probably both views are true, but true of different students. A further advantage of the January–December timing found at PNL is that it allows the previous term (October to December) to be employed usefully for special categories of students. Since the early 1960s this term has been used to give overseas students some practical experience of British libraries chosen by the school and tuition as required in British life, customs, study methods etc. The term is also used to give some British students a practical training in a London library. This is a substitute for the year's paid library work normally required by the school *as an entry prerequisite, and its timing attracts young students* who graduated in the same year. This 'condensed' experience also attracts older, senior people who are changing careers (often school teachers). Finally, an important advantage of the January–December timing in these days of limited employment prospects is that ex-students are released on to the labour market at a time different from the general exodus from most other schools. While academic libraries tend to want staff to start in September, the general effect is that students have slightly better employment prospects.

Setting up the school

IN THE LAST chapter we saw that no world wide pronouncement could be made as to whether or not librarianship should be a graduate profession. All depends on the educational context of the country concerned. It is similarly impossible to make a general statement that library schools should be established within universities or any other named level of institution. Certainly a university would be appropriate if national circumstances allowed schools to offer degree or near-degree level courses.

Schools of librarianship are usually part of some parent institution, but there are examples of totally independent schools. The only instance in Britain is the College of Librarianship, Wales, (CLW), at Aberystwyth, but here there are strong educational links with the University of Wales. To be independent, a school must be above a certain size—possibly about 300 students. It must be big enough to justify the appointment of all those ancillary staff who would otherwise be provided on a shared basis by the parent institution. Such staff are registrars and administrators, librarians and audio-visual technicians, catering and domestic staff, and manual workers such as porters, van drivers and gardeners. The small independent school would have a need of all these people, but would grossly underemploy them.

It is claimed that a school of librarianship gains from its contacts with other departments within a common parent institution. (It may also gain in prestige by being part of, say, a world famous university.) Thus in theory, staff should

36

benefit from having colleagues teaching in other disciplines, and students experience the liberalising and broadening effect of mixing with students of other departments. Observation of students and staff persuades me, however, that not much of this desirable mixing takes place in practice.

A more definite advantage claimed is that one can call on the resources of other departments in teaching, but here again, the bonus is less than it may seem. Elsewhere (page 51) I observe that using teachers from other departments is often unsuccessful. In any event, should this be required, it is quite usual to call upon teachers from outside. Perhaps, however, the most grievous penalty of being situated within a parent institution is that decisions are often taken centrally and may be inapptopriate to the school of librarianship. Thus the school may have to spend much energy in resisting the imposition of policies and procedures which are unsuited to its special needs. An example is a common student application form intended for all courses in the institution. It suits most courses tolerably well, some less well, and for a few it is ludicrously irrelevant. In short, there is a strong case to be made for independence, provided the school is large enough to be able to stand on its own feet.

It may seem apptopriate to place a school of librarianship within a large library—for example the national library of a country. There appears to be a certain logic in putting the national collection, the national bibliographic service and the national education of library staff side by side. There certainly is an advantage in a close relationship between theory and practice, and in having a large collection immediately at hand so that important library materials in all fields can readily be seen. The disadvantage is, that the teaching will almost inevitably become biased towards the needs of the parent library. This would be a particular danger if teachers were drawn from the library's staff. Students from other libraries would not be well served, and indeed the courses might easily become barely distinguishable from in-service training programmes for the large library. In setting up a system of library education

in a newly developing country the national library, as perhaps the only sizable library in existence, is a tempting choice as a place for a library school, but if this choice is made, it should be only as a temporary measure. The library school should move out as soon as possible.

The location of the school of librarianship, as with many other factors in its establishment, is often determined by local and administrative exigencies, for example where a building is available, or where an educational institution has the capacity and wish for expansion. If a choice can be made on educational grounds, a site in or near a large urban conglomeration should be chosen. There are several reasons for this. We have seen that part-time study is possible only when there is a body of potential students who can travel with ease to and from the school. In a big urban area therefore the school could teach part-time as well as full-time students, a situation preferable to that in which separate part-time teaching centres are set up. In a big town, too, there will be a large number of practising librarians in post or possibly passing through on international visits; these can be drawn upon as visiting speakers. Students in a big city will benefit from the facilities which only a big centre can provide—bookshops, theatres, recreational activities—although it must be said that some students, especially those from overseas, may be happier in a smaller town. The overwhelming advantage however, of locating a library school in a large urban area is that it will be within easy reach of many libraries. These can help in the teaching in many ways, for example through visits, projects and practical work placements. Capital cities in particular usually have a wealth of libraries. The headquarters of many national organisations, research associations, and government departments are all likely to be there, and a library, or the potential for a library, may be expected at each. The national library and/or bibliographical centre will probably also be at hand.

It is the tradition in some countries to have separate systems of library education for different branches of librarianship.

University librarians and public librarians receive their professional education in different institutions and they gain a different qualification. Although, as we have said before, the tradition of the country concerned is a weighty factor, there seems little objective justification for this division. It may merely reflect the erroneous view taken by a government or other national responsible body that university librarianship is of a higher status than public librarianship. The truth of the matter is that there is so much common ground in all forms of librarianship that separate institutions for professional education are a wasteful diffusion of energies. Furthermore a common education in librarianship fosters a sense of united professionalism across the whole spectrum of library work. One kind of librarianship can learn from another, and a foundation for this cross-fertilisation can be laid in the library school. Thus, for example, the advanced techniques of the special library and its anticipation of the needs of the user could be adopted more than they are at present by public and university libraries. Schools of librarianship might well offer specialisms in the different fields of librarianship, but a common basic course is important. In Britain it is found that this allows flexibility in career movement. Ex-students can move from one type of library to another in their careers, virtually regardless of the specialist options which they took in their qualification course. If one then queries the value of the specialisation, it might be said that it has educational as much as career value. The student learns more effectively by selecting a context for his studies rather than by trying to comprehend everything. His choice of context might well be influenced by his previous library experience rather than the kind of work he thinks he may enter at the end of the course.

The same arguments apply to the division between librarianship and information science, and here again separation may come about because governments look with more favour on one than the other, and make funds available accordingly. Possibly they see a genuine link between

information science and the need for technological advance, possibly they are merely bemused by the word 'science'. On the other hand in many parts of the world librarianship has the potential of benefitting from links with national drives to combat illiteracy. I will not attempt to define information science or librarianship or to distinguish finely between them: this would do no more than revive the old overstated arguments of twenty-five years ago in the British professional press. It is enough to say that any examination of syllabuses shows a very great deal of overlap between information science and librarianship and it would be wasteful folly to teach the two kinds of information worker separately if it can be avoided. The 'cross fertilisation' argument used in the last paragraph applies here too, as does the plea for retaining career flexibility. Indeed while the qualified librarian can turn to work in many different kinds of library, the trained information scientist, whose expertise is founded on specialist subject knowledge, may find his career opportunities very restricted.

I have argued that attempts to fragment library education by type of library work should be resisted. There are other forces which may be used to break up professional education into ineffective small units and inhibit the growth of a united profession. These are language, race and nationality. This is best explained by an example. In the Western Cape region of South Africa there are three schools of librarianship; the English-speaking University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape in the suburbs for coloured students, and not many miles away the University of Stellenbosch which teaches in Afrikaans. Each of these schools has about three staff. Library education in the region would be much more than three times as effective if it were possible for them to combine into one school with nine staff! Indeed South Africa as a whole has far too many schools of librarianship, and in consequence they are, with one exception, much too small. The one exception is the University of South Africa which teaches by correspondence. Clearly this situation arises from

40

the South African government's racial and language policy, and must affect not only librarianship but all taught disciplines. *A multitude of repetitive small units!* It is said that if a student cannot find the course he requires at his 'appropriate' university (ie by race or language) he may register elsewhere, but I am unaware of how far this is carried out in practice. A final irony is that even in the Afrikaans speaking universities students must be entirely fluent in English because the textbooks used are almost always in English. This certainly applies to librarianship.

Perhaps I should add a few words on the general problem of the use of minority and national languages as opposed to international languages. Librarians, being custodians of culture, may sometimes find themselves in sympathy with movements which seek to perpetuate or revive local languages. The basis for the support of such movements *is* understandable. In many cases the superimposition of an international language such as English has been the result of colonial rule in the past, and naturally the now independent countries wish to remove all traces of colonialism. The language, too, is a vehicle for the transmission of all aspects of culture—social tradition as well as literature. It may be all the more fragile because the record is oral rather than written. Note that the object of the local language movements is not to preserve a fossilized past, but to promote the active use of *their* language in day-to-day commerce, so that the introduction of up-to-date and technical terms is important. We can have great sympathy with the arguments for fostering vernacular languages, but before accepting them we must consider a counter-argument equally of concern to our profession. Librarians exist to facilitate communication—of information, ideas, culture. Fragmentation into many small languages impedes communication. The ideal in this respect would be a single international language, but there has been a notable lack of success for such special constructions as Esperanto. Perhaps one reason why a world-wide language has not emerged is that natural languages such as English, French and Spanish between them

41

serve the purpose. Those who advocate the use of national and minority rather than major languages should therefore consider very carefully the heavy penalty of throwing away ease of international communications. This applies throughout the alphabet from Afrikaans to Welsh. I remember staying next door to a Welsh family who would not allow their children to speak English, this in a country where English is spoken and understood by almost everyone! To put all this in library school terms, students are obviously at a grave disadvantage if they must study in a language not their own (see chapter one), but at the other extreme it would be folly to set up many ineffectively small library schools, each catering for a minority language, when all the students concerned are at ease in a major language. I repeat that librarianship books, journals and reports are not likely to be written in vernacular languages in sufficient quantity, so that in many countries the student must have language ability in order to study at all.

Throughout this chapter I have referred to the danger of schools being too small to be effective. It is time to be more explicit. The very small school of librarianship cannot justify expensive specialist equipment or specialist staff. Because of the inflexibility of small numbers, schools with this level of staffing tend to be grossly overworked. Teachers have no time for anything except keeping up to date with the day-to-day teaching. There is often no time at all for personal research and publications, and just as important, staff are unable to stand back from their immediate tasks to re-examine their aims, objectives and methods. Library schools should be the 'think tanks' of the profession, engaging in the fundamental thought with and on behalf of practitioners: the overburdened small school cannot do this. By contrast the large school, whatever its total load, has the flexibility to release staff for special tasks or secondment back to practice.

The major disadvantage of the small school, however, is that it cannot offer the student a wide enough range of

Hogg. He had the insight to see what was needed and the drive to get things done. Doubtless he harnessed to good effect the aspirations of those who wished to put Wales on the cultural map: it can be highly beneficial to recognise that a tide is flowing and to swim with it. The other principle which Hogg adopted was to think big, for only by being big could CLW prosper. So he appointed, as his first staff, four heads of department and junior staff followed later. This was unprecedented. This 'top downwards' method clearly staked out a claim to a large staff which the more usual 'bottom upwards' procedure would not. It also ensured senior staff of the right quality: later promotion of those appointed to a junior post might not. One apocryphal CLW story is that when Hogg was shown a large house as the intended building for the college he said 'That's fine for the offices: now build me a lecture block'. By making CLW large some of the problems of its isolation can be overcome, for it has acquired its own gravitational pull. Staff are now willing to move house to live at Aberystwyth because of CLW's fine reputation; there is certainly no lack of students either. This situation would not have obtained had CLW confined itself to educating bilingual Welsh librarians. An ailing small school would not have attracted staff, students or financial support. The bilingual librarians are of course being educated at CLW, but in addition CLW has an international market, attracting students from elsewhere in Britain and from many countries overseas. Also, by being big CLW can justify the appointment of specialist non-teaching staff such as library liaison officers and audio-visual technicians. (There is a sizable team of the latter and the Media Resources Unit is probably the most highly developed of any British school of librarianship.) Activities such as research and a publications programme are more likely to be found in a large school. By all these concomitants of size CLW has increased its reputation and therefore its attractiveness to staff and students. In turn demand increases the possibilities of selectivity; the effect is that CLW can

choose better staff and students, the higher quality giving another turn to the upward spiral.

Staff

THE STAFF of a school of librarianship is its major asset. It is overwhelmingly the strongest factor in determining the quality of the work done. Whatever the excellence of other aspects such as buildings and equipment, the school with indifferent staff can serve the profession no better than indifferently.

When creating a new school of librarianship it is wise to have in post some members of staff, including the head, at least a year before the first students come. A multitude of tasks have to be done, for example ordering equipment and building up a library. Unless the syllabus is laid down by some external body this must be planned in enough detail to give specific guidance to newly appointed teachers. A year is barely enough time for this; it is also scarcely enough for the whole process of obtaining the first intake of students. The following steps are involved: a) writing a prospectus or publicity material (which itself presupposes that an outline of the syllabus has been agreed); b) sending it out and receiving a response of applications; c) selecting the students, possibly by individual interviews, in good time so that existing employers know that they will be leaving. Of course local circumstances may be such that not all this sequence is necessary.

Successful recruitment of staff of a school of librarianship depends on the school being able to offer salaries and working conditions which compare favourably with those in the occupations from which they may be drawn. In most but not

all cases library school staff come from practising librarianship. The salary differential between teaching librarianship and practising librarianship will, of course, vary from time to time and place to place.

There are two aspects of working conditions. The physical conditions in a school (rest-rooms, facilities for meals, etc) may be better or worse than in a library, but the intellectual working conditions are probably better. A teacher is unlikely to be frustrated by too much supervision: he is essentially his own master when in the classroom. There is usually wide freedom to treat material in one's own way. Often there is little concern for a detailed accounting of time spent when *not teaching*, for a library school teacher *is not usually expected to observe set hours of attendance.* Any keen and successful teacher drives himself and tends to take on too much work rather than too little. One can overwork in any post but the open-ended nature of the teaching commitment puts the teacher particularly at risk.

A teacher can therefore make his own decisions about how he disposes of his time. In an academic institution he will also have the benefit of long vacations. Of course these are not entirely holidays, but again the teacher usually can choose when he takes time as his own and when he does academic work such as reading, preparing lectures, marking essays or keeping an eye on the administration of the school.

There are sometimes difficulties in recruiting particular kinds of library school staff. Often this is because of a mismatch between the salary which the school can offer and the better pay or longer salary scales in a particular branch of librarianship. When I started teaching in 1959 most library schools in Britain were heavily biased towards public librarianship. When we attempted to redress the situation by recruiting staff from university libraries we found at first that we could not attract them because of the longer salary scales in universities. Today, perhaps by chance, the situation at PNL is reversed: we currently have a shortage of staff to teach public library management. Another difficulty in

49

recruitment is attracting highly experienced and senior members of the library profession, and library schools are often chided for not having such people on their staffs. But before we lament we should consider two drawbacks to employing the eminent practitioner. Firstly there is no guarantee that he can teach. The second drawback is that promotion chance may be blocked for an existing member of staff. The senior practitioner could be attracted only by a high salary grade, and this may be a grade which is normally used for internal promotion. In other words the unproven benefits of gaining a big name on the staff may well be purchased at the cost of staff frustration.

In chapter two I advised that the staff of even a wholly part-time teaching institution should not consist entirely of part-time teachers. In a full-time library school one would expect the great majority of the staff to be full-time, but part-time teachers might be used for small teaching commitments which the expertise of the full-time staff does not cover. There is nothing wrong with this, but it is tempting to go on adding further part-time teachers as needs arise rather than to consolidate into full-time posts. Admittedly potential full-time teachers of the right subjects may not be available, and it may be easier to obtain finance for part-time rather than full-time staff, but a watch should be kept on the ratio of part-time to full-time teachers. Ideally all staff should be full-time. The disadvantages of relying on too many part-timers are several. They are associate members of staff rather than full colleagues of the full-timers. They are probably not free to attend staff meetings and many memos miss them, so they are not fully in touch with all that is happening in the school. By the same token they cannot play their part fully in the running of it. They usually attend for their teaching commitment only, so they cannot do their share of the educational administration which falls to full-time teachers (such as general oversight of overseas students, or coordinating a publications programme). For much of their non-teaching time, full-time staff are on the school's premises

I suggest that the answer would hold good for any teacher of a class of adults who have a motive to learn. Firstly an essential requirement is the intellectual ability to search out material and organise it in a clear and relevant way. Few would argue with this. The teacher imposes a helpful shape on a body of inchoate facts and ideas; if his mind is muddled he cannot lecture with the required clarity to guide students. Secondly he needs a personality to which the students can respond. This does not necessarily mean a vivid one, or the ability to crack jokes at every turn, but his enthusiasm for his subject must be evident and infectious. A dull personality can give no better than a dull lecture. I believe that the ability to teach well arises from these two qualities, but some would add a third requirement, a qualification in teaching. I have grave doubts on the necessity of a formal course and qualification similar to that required for school teachers. School teachers need to know about child psychology and the development of learning processes and they also need instruction and practice in engaging the interest—and controlling the behaviour of—a group of young people who are not always motivated to learn. This is not relevant to the teaching of adults as in a school of librarianship. Here there is no substantial craft of pedagogics: instead one may expect the normal communications between one human being and another.

I am not saying that all courses for teachers of librarianship are useless. It is helpful to meet other teachers to discuss problems and to have solutions indicated by those with experience. Courses should be practical, geared to the librarianship (or at least the adult) situation, and brief. It really does not take long to become acquainted with the newer teaching aids, for example. Courses may well be of help to the average teacher, but I cannot see that the innately poor teacher will be significantly improved by any course, whatever its length, and whatever qualifications it leads to. Luckily there is in Britain there is no more than talk that teachers in higher education should be 'qualified to teach'. In Italy, and

possibly elsewhere, the first requirement of a teacher of librarianship is that he is qualified to be a university teacher: the expertise in librarianship is secondary, and may have to be acquired hastily.

A practising librarian might add a further requirement, namely that the teacher has recent good experience in librarianship. Before and throughout my teaching career, library school lecturers have been charged with being 'out of touch' and so insulated in their academic ivory towers that they have little knowledge of the practical realities of librarianship. This charge cannot be lightly dismissed, although one would think that the teacher is likely to be factually up-to-date (insofar as facts are recorded in the literature) since it is part of his full-time task to do so. But the criticism is probably less to do with facts than the 'feel' of the current context and the judgements in practical librarianship. Bibliographers and indexers would possibly benefit from a periodic *refreshment* in the practice of *librarianship* to remind themselves for example of the sort of enquiries made, and how their techniques are put to use. Most of all, the call for a close correspondence with library practice applies to teachers of library management and library services. Here it is the experience of decision making which is valuable to the teacher, however complete his knowledge of the library scene. Other teachers would find a return to general library practice quite irrelevant. I refer to teachers of such subjects as historical bibliography, printing, reprography, even history of libraries. The refreshment they may require might come from secondment to some institution other than a library.

The *correspondence between teaching and practice* would come naturally if there were free interchange between the two parts of the profession, so that a practising librarian might take up teaching for three years, return to practice, and possibly embark on a second period of teaching later. Salary levels, and length of salary scales prevent easy movement, at least in Britain. When one enters teaching, it is probably for the rest of one's career. I give a personal

53

illustration: were I to return to practice without salary loss I would expect the pay of a chief librarian of a public or academic library. No library is likely to offer this to someone so long absent from a practising position. Indeed my last position in libraries was only of moderate level, and library employers do not regard the time spent as a library school teacher as relevant! Even someone who has been teaching only a few years finds it difficult to return to library work without losing money. The way, therefore, to refresh teachers by periods of practice is to second them to library positions.

Secondment can work in two directions. A new teacher may be seconded from his library so that he can try out teaching with the safety net of being able to return to his previous post at the end of his period as a teacher. (Often a permanent teaching post becomes available during his secondment and he can apply for this if teaching suits him.) We are here concerned, however, with the teacher being seconded to practise. This has occurred in Britain, but not frequently enough. What does the seconded teacher do? He will probably be in a supernumerary position, and if he merely observes others at work he is not gaining experience in decision making. If he is given a special extra task he will need to make decisions but he may not be fully involved in the overall and day to day management of the library. Perhaps the best plan is to give the seconded teacher a special responsibility of his own (perhaps a significant 'one off' job which needs to be done and for which no time could be found by the normal staff) together with the right to attend senior management meetings where policy is discussed and the whole work of the library is coordinated. Despite the difficulties of finding suitable tasks, the benefits of absorbing the atmosphere of the working situation are likely to be considerable.

Refreshment by secondment back to practice is one form of staff development, a concept now being given more attention than in the past. The mental batteries can also be recharged by courses (in newly developing subjects within librarianship, in curriculum development or other teaching

54

topics) and in conferences of all relevant kinds. There should be sufficient funds to enable a school to carry out a generous staff development programme. In its own interests the school may need a teacher to re-train to take up another subject: if so, it should provide the facilities. There should, too, be an allowance of time (ie the teaching load should be reduced) to enable a teacher to write books, or to allow him to do research, whether or not it leads to a higher degree. Research in librarianship is not substantively treated in this book but we should refer to its connection with teaching. Research may of course be carried out in library schools by full-time researchers, but teachers often undertake, or are involved in research as a part-time activity. There is little doubt that this benefits their teaching directly where it is relevant to a topic being taught, and more general benefits gained may be insight into the nature of research and a scepticism of propositions without sufficient evidence to back them. There is possibly a slight danger that a matter currently being researched may find its way into every lecture to the distortion of the course, but in general students find first-hand knowledge stimulating. What must be said however is that there are many fine teachers who have never undertaken research.

A special staff development situation concerns the newly appointed teacher who has probably never taught before. He should if possible join the school a term before he takes up his full teaching load. He will have a mass of material to prepare and he can best do this when in touch with colleagues who can guide him. A major fear of the new teacher is that he will not have prepared enough to keep ahead of his current teaching! His main needs are time and confidence. Despite what I have said about qualifications in teaching, a short induction course run by the institution can be very useful in indicating how he should go about his task, and might also make him feel more at home by showing him how the school and its parent body (if any) conducts its business. It cannot be stressed enough that every aid in confidence-building should be used; the new teacher may be in a state approaching terror before

his first class. It would be merciful and helpful to attach him to an experienced teacher who is not too far distant in age. He then has someone to turn to for information, both official and unofficial, and has a sympathetic confidant who can do much to keep up morale. Too much interference from the head of the school is not a good thing, but the new teacher often has no idea of whether he is teaching well, badly, or somewhere in-between. A few encouraging words from the head, or some gently-phrased guidance are important. Naturally, to assess a teacher, someone has to sit in on his lectures, and this in itself can paralyse the newcomer. The most painless way is not to sit in on a new teacher for the first month or so. Also, if sitting in on any colleague's lectures by any member of staff were encouraged as a general practice it would lose the supposed stigma of being associated with something wrong. (Teachers can learn much from their colleagues in this way, and overlap and 'underlap' between courses can be reduced).

Only a little can be said in general about the deployment of staff as much depends on the number of courses offered and the subjects within them. It seems sensible to group staff by subject, forming teams of teachers who teach the same or related subjects. Each teacher or team teaches in the same field to all the courses offered by the school. Thus at PNL for example the same group of six or so staff would teach cataloguing to the BA course, the postgraduate course, and other part-time and special courses. A teacher could be a member of two or more teams—if, for example, his commitment was split between say management and subject bibliography. The College of Librarianship Wales, being an independent institution, can make its subject teams into departments. This enhances the salaries of the four heads of department, but introduces some rigidity into the staff structure. A split commitment, such as that described above, is not possible. The only other way of grouping staff would be by course. In the PNL case given this would mean totally separate staff for the two major full-time courses

56

(BA and postgraduate) and there seems no justification for splitting expertise in this way. One would need two experts in medical and hospital librarianship instead of one! There may however be committees responsible for running the various courses. These will consist of teachers who bear some administrative responsibility for the course, but whose membership of a teaching team for the whole school is not affected.

The 1960s was a decade of expansion of library school staffs, whereas currently staffs are being held stable or declining slightly. In the expansion period it was possible for a teacher to develop a new subject from his own interests. This might mean that extra staff were needed to teach it, or more likely a new teacher was wanted to teach the subjects now discarded by the person who had moved on. Getting staff was then possible. Which meant, in effect, that teachers could slowly alter their load to a more congenial package. In the present era of decline the replacement of a staff member who leaves is not always possible. If the departing teacher is a member of a large team, the fellow members can usually close ranks and absorb the little extra work. A very serious situation occurs however if a specialist leaves and cannot be replaced, for example, a single teacher of medical librarianship. Here classes have to be discontinued, and naturally the position is most acute when the departure is at short notice, as would be the case if the reason were death or sudden illness. Where one can predict that staff will leave at a definite time in the future (by retirement for example) then efforts can be made to retrain some of the existing staff to fill the gap. So from the days of expansion when the teacher could to some extent 'do his own thing' we have come to the position where he may be persuaded to prepare and teach a subject which may not be his first choice. One cannot however coerce people to teach things which are anathema to them, and there must be agreement on the part of the teacher concerned.

Finally, associations of teachers should be mentioned. In Britain the national association is ABLISS (Association of

British Librarianship and Information Studies Schools) although this is really a meeting of the heads of library schools to discuss policy. Individual teachers are catered for by the Library Education Group, but being a group of the Library Association it must offer its membership to all members of the parent association. It is useful to have a forum where practitioners and teachers can meet, but by the same token it is probably less effective as a meeting place for teachers. (Only about one fifth of LEG membership consists of library school teachers). The need for teachers from the various schools to meet is not being fully satisfied in Britain, but on the few occasions when meetings occur, their value is amply demonstrated. International meetings can also be a great stimulus, but obviously they are far more expensive, and as I have stated throughout this book, differing national contexts are a problem. The same would apply to an international association of library school teachers, and, indeed, to international standards for schools of librarianship. International exchange of teachers of librarianship also contends with this difficulty, but its success is demonstrated by the frequency of its use and its repetition in the same places. But even here, some freedom of subject treatment must be possible. It was not feasible for Britain to accept teachers from elsewhere when we were tied to an externally laid down and externally examined syllabus.

Students

STUDENTS COME with a variety of personal attributes and backgrounds, and it is surprising that the different categories into which they can be grouped are not reflected to any extent in the level of their performance.

The most apparent categorisation is by sex. About two thirds of British students are female, and one hears both in this country and elsewhere recurrent complaints about the 'over-feminisation of the profession'. Why librarianship does not attract more men is not clear, although the long tradition of the profession being a suitably genteel occupation for young women may be a cause, as also may be the poor level of salaries in the past. But for many years in Britain women have had equal pay with men, so they are not cheaper to employ, and, unfair as it may be to women, men are often preferred for senior positions. (One must however take into account the shorter and interrupted careers of some women.) Since therefore a man has every chance of getting to the top, there would seem to be a reasonable incentive for males to enter the profession now that salary scales compare fairly well with similar occupations such as teaching. I am myself, however, not perturbed by 'over-feminisation': I would be only if there were certain tasks in librarianship which could only or best be tackled by men, and if the supply of men were insufficient to meet these needs. This clearly is not so, and if one regards men and women as equal in the employment sphere there can be no complaint, whatever the proportions of the sexes. As students, no difference can be discerned

between men and women. Despite popular notions women can tackle technical subjects (such as computers, printing and reprographic technology) just as well as men, even if they have no scientific background.

Another category is that of mature students. Most courses in Britain have special arrangements for the admission of such people. Naturally no such arrangements are necessary if the mature student has the normal qualifications for entry, but mature students are usually defined as older than average 8490 students (say over twenty-five) who do not have the educational certificates normally required to be considered for admission. Some concession to such people is thought justified because in this way compensation can be given for educational opportunities missed earlier in life. Thus the student may have been forced to leave school earlier because of domestic difficulties or merely because of wrong advice, or he may be a 'late developer'. So a second educational chance may be given by mature entry arrangements. My own view is that admission of students without the normal requirements is not warranted if it is merely on the grounds that the student is older than other applicants. There must be some demonstration that, despite the lack of the usually expected educational certificates, the student is capable of tackling the course applied for. This demonstration could be the submission of an alternative qualification (perhaps a vocational diploma) or evidence that a publication or other substantial piece of academic work had been undertaken, or perhaps just a convincing performance at a searching interview. In some cases a special examination could be set, or long essays asked for. Without this demonstration of ability the admission of mature students could be no kindness, for failure on a course is probably the more serious the older a student is. Provided older students are judged capable however, they do not noticeably have problems on courses just because of their age, despite their own fears that their brains 'may have become a bit rusty'. If years away from formal study is a real problem at all, it is often more than compensated by the
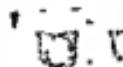
extra motivation which older students bring to their studies. And although a thirty-five year old student may feel ancient in a class of twenty year olds, to the teacher in his fifties the whole class appears uniformly young... In fact, the ages within a class mix very well, both academically and socially.

One may also divide students into those who have library experience before attending the school of librarianship and those without. Whether or not such experience is required by the school depends on the type of course and the assumptions made in course planning and teaching. First degree courses do not normally ask for previous library experience. To make such a requirement would impair recruitment, for the vast majority of those leaving secondary or high school seeking a degree course in any subject expect to proceed directly in the same year. Librarianship would suffer by being an exception, and in any event there is time within a three or four year programme to build in periods of practical placement in libraries. One year postgraduate courses are another matter. Most British library schools expect a year's previous library experience from these students, but a few merely deem some library experience 'desirable'. This means that they must take some students who have no knowledge of work in a library at all. In turn it follows that the planning of the course and its teaching must take this into account. When he is before his class the teacher must bear in mind that some concepts, some illustrations which he might use for a group of students who have worked in libraries cannot be employed. He needs, in other words, a fresh set of assumptions, and the lack of a practical foundation on which he can build must be an added handicap in a necessarily overburdened course. Employers, too, look with less favour on ex-students who had no library background before the course.

At PNL there is a unique arrangement which is referred to at the end of chapter three. The normal requirement is a year's experience, but students lacking this may join the school for an extra preliminary term consisting largely of systematic practical training in a London library. I know of

61

no direct comparisons between the performance of students with and without previous library experience, but at PNL we did, many years ago, compare the examination achievement of our 'direct entrants' (those undertaking the preliminary term noted above) with those who had worked in a library. The two categories rated almost equal, in fact to our mild surprise the direct entrants performed slightly (but statistically insignificantly) better. It must be added that direct entrants sometimes feel less confident than their fellow students about the prospect of their first post after library school. Also we occasionally decline to accept certain students for the preliminary term mode of entry, for we feel that although the preparation for the course is as good if not better than the often haphazard training one may acquire by working for a year in a library, the preliminary term is not as good as a test of commitment to the profession. So if we are in doubt on this score we ask for a year's 'real' work in a library.

It might be possible to list the personality traits required of, and found in, librarians, but I doubt if it would be a useful exercise and it is even more doubtful as an aid in student selection. Some careers books list such qualities as 'a sense of order' or a 'methodical mind', but I know of few occupations where these would not be assets. I do not believe that librarianship has strict personality requirements; the profession merely requires normal well-adjusted people, and 'normal' of course embraces a wide range of differing types. But after looking at the profession—particularly students—over a number of years, one sees a certain tendency which is admittedly a wide generalisation with many exceptions. It is this. There are not enough people in librarianship of the outgoing type which business firms describe in their staff advertisements as 'dynamic', 'thrusting', even 'aggressive'. Perhaps it is natural enough that such people will be attracted to the business firms. Of course I can think of colleagues and students of this type, but it is significant that two who spring to mind have left librarianship. (One was a publishing

executive when I last saw him on his ascending spiral, the other is a popular astrologer and television personality.) If we do not get enough of the dynamic people in librarianship, by the same token we have too many who are passive. With most librarians this is no more than a proper reticence, a distaste for the shouting which takes place in the market. Many librarians are genuine scholars, others are would-be scholars: the make-up of the profession must be very similar to that of the school-teacher. There can be little complaint in this middle ground, but in its more severe form passivity can be a problem. Over-shy, colourless library staff have no wish to exploit their service and in any event they cannot do it effectively. Furthermore they contribute to the image of the passive library and passive librarian. Their effect on recruitment to the profession perpetuates the vicious circle.

Perhaps there is a continuous graduation from 'over-shy and colourless' through 'inadequate personality' to 'psychologically disturbed' or 'mentally ill'. Certainly prospective staff and prospective students who fit all these labels are directed towards libraries and library schools in numbers greater than is justified by their proportions in the community. Despite constant efforts to educate them, careers advisors both official and unofficial (for example parents) think of librarianship as an undemanding occupation suitable for those who need a life without tension, for instance people recovering from a nervous breakdown. Of course, careers advisors must try everything when they have a virtually unplaceable client. The same problem applies to the physically handicapped, for here too it is wrongly assumed that library work is suitable for those with a disability, even for people confined to a wheelchair. These misconceptions are indeed strange: it seems that careers advisors are relying on an image of librarianship rather than looking at one or two libraries or speaking to librarians.

All this seems a little remote from library schools until we realise that entry to the profession of librarianship is largely in the hands of those who select the students for library

63

school. Some students will have been recruited by libraries previously, but unless they can qualify they remain in the non-professional ranks. Selection for library school can therefore do something to affect the make-up of the future profession. One could, if it were thought appropriate, weight the selection on each of the counts so far discussed in this chapter. Thus one could choose more men, insist on previous library experience, and favour more dynamic personalities, or those who will argue and show themselves to be more than unthinking conformists. This last is possible only if entry to library school is competitive and if an interview or other technique is employed which seeks to assess personality. The inadequate and the mentally or physically unsuitable will by this means fail to be selected, but caring library school selectors will look at individual cases very carefully. It would be safe to reject all applicants who had a history of mental illness for example, but it would also be extremely harsh, and it would not face up to the responsibility which all employers and educational establishments share of helping in rehabilitation. A medical opinion should be obtained but even so a fine judgement has to be made on each such applicant and a risk taken. At PNL a majority of the students with a history of mental illness show no signs of recurrence during their studies, a minority have difficulties, and a few are disastrous mistakes and fail or leave the course.

Selection of library school students is a little different from the selection which may be appropriate for a purely academic subject such as a first degree in history. Selecting for a vocational course means allowing entry to a profession, and therefore non-academic aspects such as personality and commitment must be assessed. A selector for an academic course could probably learn enough about an applicant from the application form alone, since the educational achievement will be recorded there. Even so, references are often asked for, and sometimes interviews are conducted. In a vocational course such as librarianship, references and/or interviews assume greater importance.

took the final assessments, and only five failed to obtain the diploma, three of these after some form of re-examination. A similar small number left the course before the final examinations. In a first degree course it is most unusual for a student to complete his three or four years of study and not obtain a degree.

The previous paragraph illustrates yet again that national educational traditions impose their procedures on librarianship as well as all other subjects. On many issues international agreements seem impossible. Another example from the field of student admissions illustrates this well. A few years ago I was looking at a draft of international standards for schools of librarianship compiled under the aegis of IFLA. The author was American, and although by definition the standards were intended to be internationally applicable, there were many signs of American bias. (I make no criticism. Let me say at once that despite my efforts I know that this book will betray woeful British bias to an American.) The particular point which I have in mind from the draft IFLA standards is the statement that any applicants not selected by a library school should be told the reason for their rejection. On the face of it this seems open and honest and it might well be the practice in some countries. It certainly is not the general practice in Britain. Almost all interviewing bodies in all spheres of life—government and public service, business employers, education—merely give a 'yes' or 'no' verdict. To give reasons would be offensive or embarrassing in some circumstances, and one cannot give reasons on some occasions and not others. It would hurt rather than help an applicant to be told that he has an inadequate personality for example, and human nature being what it is, the rejected candidate would contest the assessment. So a painful and totally profitless correspondence would ensue, with the applicant's own opinion of himself being matched against the interviewers' judgement. The contest is profitless because at the end of the day it is the interviewing body which must take the decision. The interviewers, too, may have been influenced by confidential references to which they cannot refer in

correspondence. This, then, is one possible IFLA standard which has no chance of being implemented in Britain. Other standards are likely to suffer the same fate elsewhere for similar reasons.

So far in this chapter I have dealt with kinds of students and student admission. The reader may wonder when I will come to discussing the student within the library school. The answer is that much of this material is in the next chapter on teaching. There are however some matters a little removed from the classroom situation which it is appropriate to discuss here, and one of these is tutorial care. The word 'tutorial' is used with several meanings of which the main groupings are:

1 *The teaching tutorial* Teaching to only one or two students, perhaps the only ones to choose a less popular speciality, might be termed tutorial teaching whatever the nature of the teaching. More strictly the term should be applied to discussion with a single student, usually based on a piece of work which he has done. (The Oxbridge system.) This could be the entire teaching or a supplement to the teaching in any subject.

2 *The remedial tutorial* Here the attempt is to diagnose and remedy a problem which the student has. The student may have discovered the difficulty himself and asked for help, or the deficiency is made plain from the low assessment given to a piece of work, in which case the teacher may ask to see all who scored less than a certain mark. This kind of tutorial merges into the next category, but to keep them separate one might consider that the remedial tutorial is usually concerned with a specific problem in a single subject.

3 *The 'pastoral' tutorial* is the type with which we are concerned in this chapter. It may be defined as a tutorial to check overall progress on the course, to discuss if there are any outside factors having an adverse impingement on studies (financial stress, accommodation, personal relationships etc) and to show a concern for the student *as a human being* as well as an academic unit.

The need for a pastoral system is not felt until a library school is of a certain size, probably having about fifteen

68

staff, or (assuming a staff/student ratio of 1:10) approximately 150 students. The length of time a student stays in the school will affect this figure. The small school probably does not need such a system because all students will be known to all staff, and therefore a student's problem, either a personal or a general academic difficulty, is unlikely to be overlooked. Also a sound assessment (eg for a testimonial) can be made, as several teachers will know more about the student than merely his marks. In a large school this natural contact inevitably breaks down and must be replaced by some mechanism. If this is not done it would be probable that many students would go through the school without any member of staff knowing them well enough. Their performance within individual subjects will of course be known by the teachers concerned, but if some classes are large there will be little opportunity to know students as people. Furthermore if a student has a difficulty pervasive over many subjects it is likely to be masked. He might ask for some concession (eg relaxation of essay deadlines) from all of his subject teachers, but no-one diagnoses that he has a general problem (possibly caused by some outside factor which needs investigating) because all these transactions are separate. The 'personal', 'moral' or pastoral tutor has the responsibility to look at a student's work as a whole. Subject teachers report to him his assessments, absences, or if work is late. The tutor, in his discussions with his student, treads with discretion in the area of the student's background, including where necessary his private life and medical state. There is a wish to know the student as a person, but not to probe unnecessarily. Academic failings may often be caused by a worry over some external matter or a health problem, so some enquiries are warranted. Experience, and the temperament of both tutor and student determine where the balance is struck. The tutor's other function is to act as the link between the student and the 'directorate' of the library school. While the head of the school, or the teacher in charge of the course should not be a remote figure, neither can deal individually with all the matters which arise from students–supporting

69

These last are important. With sufficient numbers they
arise spontaneously, although they are always dependent
on one or two people keen enough to be organisers. They
cannot be forced by staff, but they should be encouraged.
Too often the social events *occur* only at the end of courses.
This is natural enough but when attending these I have al-
ways thought it a pity that I did not have a similar oppor-
tunity to get to know students as thoroughly at an earlier
stage in the course, when the increased contact might have
been of more benefit. Perhaps, however, the end of the
course is the only time at which students escape the inevi-
table constraints of the staff/student relationship. However
friendly and informal the staff are, students know that one
of the duties of the teachers is to assess them, and an assess-
ment is built up from all forms of contact as well as marks.

Some institutions have a professional student counselling
service which may overlap or replace the function of the pas-
toral tutor in dealing with personal problems. The professional
counsellors are trained for this work, and perform it full time,
often as part of a central student services unit. To do their
work effectively, the counselling must be quite confidential,
for the problem to be resolved may concern intimate areas
such as finance, emotional entanglements, pregnancy, drugs,
psychological disturbance. This confidentiality, while com-
pletely understood and accepted, causes a difficulty to the
teaching department from which the student comes, for ex-
ample the school of librarianship. A student may be in grave
difficulty but unless he gives permission for confidentiality
to be broken for the purpose, the school of librarianship is
unaware of his trouble. (Or some disturbance is observed,
but it is unexplained.) Therefore the school's facilities to help
cannot be called into play. These might include some adjust-
ment to the course, a relaxation of deadlines for written work,
or much more important, a dispensation by the examiners at
the end of the course for cases of hardship or illness. Natur-
ally, for these concessions to be invoked, evidence is required.
The confidentiality of the counselling (outside the school)

their applications for posts, signing their various forms, explaining school policy, visiting them on practical placement, and many other major and minor administrative items.

It would seem to be sensible to allocate a student for this pastoral care to a teacher who has some kindred interest or who would in any event take a major part in teaching the student and so would automatically build up contact. It is, however, not easy to do this. Teachers have a limit on the number of students which they can take as their share of pastoral care, and it may well be that the most 'appropriate' tutor for a student has his capacity already fully taken up by other students. Also it is important that tutor allocations are made as soon as the student joins the school, for many problems are initial ones and he needs guidance at this stage more than any other. As the student will not have chosen his optional subjects or the slant of his course until perhaps a week or so has elapsed there is often little rational basis for tutor allocation at the beginning of the course. There is in fact little harm in a random allocation provided extreme mis-matches are avoided. It would be inadvisable for example to pair up a mature male student of forty-five with a woman teacher in her twenties who has just joined the staff. Friction between tutor and student is extremely rare, and in any case a student should not be allowed to change his tutor to a more 'congenial' teacher. Such a change would reflect on both the parties concerned. If, as sometimes happens, the student finds it easier to communicate with someone else, the ploy of using a teaching or remedial tutorial as a pastoral tutorial can be employed without discourtesy to the pastoral tutor provided he is informed of the content and told that 'it arose when speaking of cataloguing . . .' In other words, although the tutor has the responsibility to ensure proper contact with, and assessment of his student, other opportunities for contact exist. It could scarcely be otherwise in any collection of articulate human beings brought closely together. Apart from in class, students and teachers meet at meal times, when travelling, and at whatever sporting and social events are arranged.

These last are important. With sufficient numbers they arise spontaneously, although they are always dependent on one or two people keen enough to be organisers. They cannot be forced by staff, but they should be encouraged. Too often the social events occur only at the end of courses. This is natural enough but when attending these I have always thought it a pity that I did not have a similar opportunity to get to know students as thoroughly as I did at an earlier stage in the course, when the increased contact might have been of more benefit. Perhaps, however, the end of the course is the only time at which students escape the inevitable constraints of the staff/student relationship. However friendly and informal the staff are, students know that one of the duties of the teachers is to assess them, and an assessment is built up from all forms of contact as well as marks.

Some institutions have a professional student counselling service which may overlap or replace the function of the pastoral tutor in dealing with personal problems. The professional counsellors are trained for this work, and perform it full time, often as part of a central student services unit. To do their work effectively, the counselling must be quite confidential, for the problem to be resolved may concern intimate areas such as finance, emotional entanglements, pregnancy, drugs, psychological disturbance. This confidentiality, while completely understood and accepted, causes a difficulty to the teaching department from which the student comes, for example the school of librarianship. A student may be in grave difficulty but unless he gives permission for confidentiality to be broken for the purpose, the school of librarianship is unaware of his trouble. (Or some disturbance is observed, but it is unexplained.) Therefore the school's facilities to help cannot be called into play. These might include some adjustment to the course, a relaxation of deadlines for written work, or much more important, a dispensation by the examiners at the end of the course for cases of hardship or illness. Naturally, for these concessions to be invoked, evidence is required. The confidentiality of the counselling (outside the school)

prevents the transmission of that evidence to those who need it to give material help to the student.

The pastoral tutorial system, indeed all forms of student contact, allow for 'feedback', that is, the opinion of students on the programme they are offered. They may have views on the content of a course, its relevance to their needs, its treatment and the quality of the teaching. Students may express themselves to the relevant teachers directly, or may bring up a comment obliquely, through a tutorial or elsewhere. They are often reluctant to criticise, or at least make their criticisms known in the right quarter. There is a case, therefore, for a more organised system of feedback. One method is to invite students to make oral or written comments at the end of their time in the school, or at periodic intervals particularly in longer courses. Some years ago the PNL school asked students to make written comments at the end of their course if they wished. To encourage frankness and to bolster the timid, we allowed the remarks to be anonymous. While many useful points were made, one or two students took the opportunity to make personal criticisms of the staff of a very hurtful nature. (There is a distinction in presentation, if not in kind, in saying that a course is found dull rather than that Mr X is a boring teacher.) Although one unfair and spiteful gibe did refer to me, I felt that the staff should be prepared to continue to accept the risk of such attacks for the sake of the benefits of anonymity. However my colleagues as a whole decided that in future comments should be signed, and in fact this system fell into disuse.

Another more systematic, and perhaps more satisfactory form of feedback is to survey the students using a carefully constructed questionnaire. The advantage of this method is that a fairly full and representative student view is obtained on matters on which it is thought necessary to have information. The disadvantage is the obverse of the same coin: no information is forthcoming (except perhaps from the odd remark) on topics not specified in the questionnaire and so there may be problems which remain hidden. For my own

postgraduate course I adopt an open, unstructured approach to feedback, for I do not feel that an intensive one-year course will be much interested in sparing the time to complete questionnaires, particularly when it is clear that the problems and frictions within the course spring from one major constraint –lack of time. For some years I have held a meeting every term to which are invited all students on the course who wish to come, and all teachers in charge of the various subjects which make up the course. There is no agenda, for it is intended that students shall raise items for discussion spontaneously. This plan sometimes means an embarrassing silence at the beginning of the meeting, but once someone starts, the comments flow freely. The unstructured method ensures that students are not led into discussing items of no interest to them, but that what really is of concern to them emerges. Of course the system is not perfect. The student who puts a strong case may not be representative of others, for there may be a silent majority against him which does not exercise its right to speak. Also quite contradictory views can be put at one meeting or from one meeting to another. Naturally votes can be taken on clear-cut issues. The main value of these meetings is that they do make plain when a major issue is troubling the students, as can be seen when criticisms are heated and there is a general agreement on them among the students present. Often there is no simple solution to the problems raised, and a remedy advocated one year is exactly contrary to that called for by a previous year. These meetings do however tend to take the steam out of possible discontent. Hopefully the student feels that he has been given a chance to have his say, and it is useful that he should check his ideas against the experience of others. Perhaps, too, he learns that the staff implement suggestions when they can, and even where change is impossible in the nature of things, they listen with sympathy and understanding.

Student membership of committees has not yet been mentioned because 'student participation' can mean so much more than a means of feedback in the sense in which we have

used it so far. Feedback is however the concern of a staff/ student committee which may be set up for this sole purpose, or which may include other functions such as arranging social events. A staff/student committee may be a successful way of ventilating student views, but it suffers from the defect of all student representation on committees, that is that students have great difficulty in representing their colleagues. How can two or three students speak for a class of say forty? They rarely have the opportunity to have a general discussion of the issue beforehand, and in any event committee meetings take paths which diverge from their agenda, so that no-one can be fully prepared. One should add to this the other reason why student members are not representative. People who are interested in taking up such positions are often more articulate, more mature, and sometimes more politically active than the general run of students. What is true for them is not necessarily true for the class as a whole.

Staff/student committees do not really constitute student participation. This phrase (almost a catchphrase nowadays, it is so widely used) means student representation on bodies which ensure that the student voice is heard whenever academic and other decisions are made. The student body participates in the running of the institution at all levels by student membership of committees for individual courses, committees for the school of librarianship, and committees such as faculty boards and the academic board or senate in the parent institution. The general demand for student participation is widespread and vociferous and cannot be resisted. I therefore bow to the wind and welcome four students on my course committee for the postgraduate course for which I am responsible. (Other members apart from myself as chairman are six staff, the head of the school (ex officio), and a representative of the school library.) It is significant that no students offered themselves for election this year, although admittedly the election was held late because of difficulties caused ironically by student disruption of the college administration.

The truth is that not all students care keenly about participation; the battle-cry comes from some individually active students and most of all from student organisations. When students do take up their place on committees they do tend to concern themselves with domestic matters and their own immediate problems and complaints. (Inadequacies of lunch arrangements, small personal timetabling queries are examples.) These matters could be dealt with elsewhere, saving the time of the committee for its more proper task of academic planning and management. Only rarely have I found a student member who can contribute usefully in this area. I do not find this surprising as I hold the unfashionable view that students do not have the experience to plan and run courses. But I repeat that since the system requires it of me I willingly accept student representation. I treat students as far as possible as full members of my committee and ask of them the same discretion as from other members when dealing with confidential issues. Students cannot, however, be full members in two respects. Firstly they must be excluded when individual staff or students are discussed, also of course when assessments are being prepared. Secondly the student cannot easily be asked to undertake tasks on behalf of the committee. He does not have the time, and it is inappropriate to ask him to negotiate with other teachers, for example.

We have so far looked at student participation where a relatively small number of students join a committee to ensure that the student voice is heard when decisions are made. We are thinking here of perhaps as few as one or two student places on a committee, although there is some agreement that the minimum should be two as the single student may feel isolated and is probably very unrepresentative. When the student percentage on a body rises above about thirty per cent a sharp change in climate can occur, particularly when the committee is a high level body such as an academic board or senate. We are now in the realm of student power rather than student participation. A few years ago, the academic board of PNL included thirty-seven per cent of students, believed

75

to be the highest figure of any academic institution in Britain. (This percentage has now been reduced.) In my view the effect of this extremely high student representation was to attract politically-motivated militants whose aim was disruption. As a member of the academic board I observed their tactics. It was quite possible to obtain a majority for some extreme and ill-founded proposals, for all students would attend all meetings and would vote as a block, mandated from the students' union. A few like-minded members of staff, plus absences of other staff because of pressing teaching engagements was enough on occasions to turn thirty-seven per cent into fifty per cent. Another ploy was for the students not to attend, or to walk out, thus rendering the meeting inquorate. I do not wish to make any reference to the series of 'troubles' which PNL experienced in the past, except to say that whatever the ostensible cause of each incident, judgement can only be fairly made against the background I have sketched.

This chapter should end on a happier note. Let it be made plain that the last paragraph refers to a large college—some 5000 students—as a whole, not to the school of librarianship. Librarianship students are not often active politically, and, when they are, militancy is very rare. We were, indeed, speaking of undue passivity early in this chapter. Librarianship students, too, have a vocational end to their studies, so most of them are well motivated to learn. If political militancy is rare, so is the problem of indiscipline in class. The worst that normally can be expected is the procrastinator who can never hand his essay in on time. But the terrors of the unruly classroom, as depicted in some accounts of school teaching, do not exist in schools of librarianship. There is, indeed, a generally happy relationship between teachers and taught.

Chapter 7

Teaching and assessment

IN THIS CHAPTER I give my views on teaching methods both inside and outside the classroom, and discuss the ways in which a student's performance may be assessed. I stress that I am giving a personal view based on experience rather than a consensus of the writings of other teachers or educational theorists. My remarks here apply to most subjects in a librarianship curriculum; the following three chapters are directed respectively at the major 'core' areas and are contributed by my specialist colleagues with experience of teaching and directing them.

Teaching methods may be divided into the participative and non-participative. Participative methods are those in which the student does not rely entirely upon the teacher, but undertakes some kind of directed work in order to teach himself. This goes beyond the normal back-up reading expected of any student and includes exercises or projects of many kinds. Examples are seminars or tutorials and their preparation, case studies, in-tray exercises, rôle playing, 'games' involving a computer and many others. All these may be a complement to or a substitute for a lecture. The conventional lecture has a long tradition, the participative methods are relatively new, and therefore there is much more talking and *writing about them* in educational circles, perhaps indeed more talking and writing than use in the classroom. These methods are undoubtedly valuable, and I will look at them later, but firstly the balance must be redressed by setting out the very real virtues of the conventional lecture. I do this

in the knowledge that I am disagreeing with the views of my colleague, Brian Redfern, in chapter ten.

Students sometimes complain that a lecture is a waste of their time because they could have obtained the same information from books or periodicals. There is some weight in this criticism if it is applied to some lectures and some students. But not all students find the time and motivation to do all the reading they should, and more important, there is often a crucial problem of finding enough multiple copies of a text for a whole class to read within a reasonable time. The advantages of the lecture are however more positive than this. Even if the teacher is no more than a talking textbook he can stop to ensure that the class is following him, he can explain again in different words, he can respond to questions from students. I teach, inter alia, technical subjects such as printing and reprography, and over the years I have been told several times that it is easier to follow a lecture than to puzzle out explanations of machinery etc from a book. And not all ostensibly appropriate books are really suitable: the lecture can be geared precisely to the needs of the students in front of the teacher. Perhaps, however, the lecture method shows at its best when the teacher has something individual to give to his hearers. This may be a brilliant style which excites interest in the subject, or it may be information unobtainable elsewhere. This up-to-the-minute data could come from current research which the teacher is undertaking or knows about, or it could be material prepared for a future publication. In my own teaching I have supplemented the latter with a typescript deposited in the library when the publication is at a sufficiently advanced stage.

When speaking of lectures one often uses the term 'formal lecture', although the method described in the last paragraph, with its possibility of interplay between teacher and student, is informal. The true formal lecture does not allow for student response, partly because its content is designed to be a one-way communication of ideas and information, and partly because the numbers in the audience are often too great. A

78

big class does inhibit student participation, and in any event a comment made by a student in such a large gathering is not heard by his colleagues, so unless the teacher remembers to repeat it, they have the frustrating experience of listening to answers to unknown questions. I recall the case of a colleague from another department who came to give a lecture to a class of about 150 students. She was unused to such a large class, was uneasy with the microphone which is, of course, necessary in these circumstances, and attempted to 'chat' to the students and evoke response as though she were dealing with the small groups common in her own department. Response was minimal. Naturally the formal lecture calls for some formality on the part of the teacher, and this can have positive value. I find that the lecturer is conscious of a 'sense of occasion'. On show to so many, he prepares particularly carefully and pays attention to methods of presentation such as visual aids and handouts. Indeed I wear my best suit when giving a formal lecture to our whole postgraduate course (about 170 students this year). Put more seriously the special occasion causes the adrenalin to flow: the teacher feels under a little extra tension. Such tension is healthy in any teaching. I distrust the blasé teacher who feels none and who says that with his years of experience he can do it all with his eyes shut. He probably taught much better in his earlier days when a trace of apprehension made him prepare better.

Characteristics of the lecture, if properly prepared and delivered, are that it is systematic and that it has a definite and planned scope so that coverage of required areas of material can be guaranteed. It is in these respects that the participative methods of teaching may be weaker. One may take as an example the seminar, or student discussion led by a teacher. To lead such a discussion is *extremely difficult* if the right balance is to be struck. To steer the group towards covering all useful areas will kill the discussion if done with too heavy a hand; to let the talk wander at will may keep up interest but will leave the students with a patchy, *unsystematic view* of the subject. Again, student projects, where individuals or

79

groups are assigned to investigate and report on some topic, must be limited in scope if they are to be manageable. Too much teaching by this method is likely to equip the student with an array of possibly well understood but disparate tit-bits, together with enormous gaps and no overall view. I do not deny that he may be equipped with better understanding, but in a practical subject such as librarianship, coverage of at least a minimum basic area is important. (To have done a fine project on library buildings is of little use when, in his career, the ex-student is faced with a problem in library finance which he has not touched.) A few years ago I spoke to a young woman who had studied at a library school in Europe which employs the new participatory methods to the exclusion of conventional lectures. Her comments bear out my view of the fragmented picture of librarianship to which this policy may lead. Recently students from the same school visited us at PNL. I remember their surprise at the conventional rows of desks which we had in the room we set aside for them. Had they looked in other rooms they would have seen that we were equipped for informal teaching too.

For the sake of clear argument I have made a sharp distinction between the lecture and the participatory methods of teaching, but in practice it is rare to concentrate entirely on one or the other. The art is to make the right balance. A very common situation is to have lectures supplemented by discussions in small groups which may cover the same ground or extend or apply the lecture information. This form of complementary seminar may be particularly important in conjunction with the formal lecture where no informal response is possible, but may indeed be quite unnecessary where all the teaching is to small groups. Some topics call for more discussion than others, and the proper complement for some forms of lecture, for example where the content is a one way exposition, may well be individual tutorials to clear up any difficulties which students may have.

I have now touched on seminars and tutorials by way of example. These are probably the most commonly used

methods of participative teaching. The word 'seminar' is used with many meanings (for example it can be used of a formal conference with pre-printed papers and the minimum of discussion) but I take it to mean a discussion group of students led by a teacher. I have already referred to some of the difficulties encountered with it (page 79): the degree of success in overcoming them depends on the suitability of the topic chosen to the seminar technique, the skill of the teacher and the capabilities of the students. A seminar may fail, too, if the discussion group is too large or too small. At below about six students there may be insufficient stock of energy or pooled experience to keep the discussion going: above twelve or so the difficulties of keeping the discussion on a relevant course will be increased and some students will be submerged and say very little. Some teachers make a deliberate policy of 'drawing out' quieter members of the group by posing direct questions to them and not to their more vociferous colleagues. I am *temperamentally reluctant to do this, as it savours of school and kills spontaneity.* Perhaps it can be argued that it is the responsibility of the student to decide how much he wishes to take part in an educational facility offered him. I may be wrong, and I may find a student whom I have to prod into discussion for his own good, but so far I am satisfied that even the quieter students are following the discussion and benefitting from it. Students like seminars and I have no doubt that they are essential if topics are properly chosen. They are certainly valuable as a complement to a lecture, but I am less happy with their use as substantive teaching, that is to cover new material, particularly of a detailed or factual nature. The educational experience of a successful seminar is undoubtedly good, but the weakness is that the benefit remains unrecorded. At the end of his course the student can sum up his educational experience by looking over his notes from lectures and readings, together with his essays and other exercises. What has he to remind him of what he obtained from seminars? Often nothing: a serious matter if seminars were more than complementary to the main teaching. To combat this, and to ensure that students prepare adequately for discussion (without

81

proper preparation a seminar can fail disastrously) PNL has introduced the requirement of seminar notes. Students read on the topic of the discussion and write brief notes to remind themselves of points to make. They may add to these notes during or immediately after the seminars. The notes are handed in for marking by the teacher and some contribute a little towards the final assessment mark of the student. Also staff sometimes issue a duplicated summary of the discussion.

The three types of tutorial were defined in chapter six where the 'pastoral' tutorial was discussed. The other types –the remedial and the teaching tutorial–do not need extended treatment. The remedial tutorial is to correct something which has gone wrong. The need is often first seen by a teacher when marking a piece of work from a student in which there may be errors, a lack of understanding, or faults in organisation. Of course students in difficulties may approach a teacher in the subject concerned for a tutorial, but sadly, students are reluctant to do this. It is sad because by the time the teacher calls the student to a tutorial after the first poor piece of work, several months of preventable confusion may have elapsed. (Necessarily work cannot be set until the course has progressed some way and further time must be allowed for its execution, and marking. This inevitably long delay is particularly worrying in one year courses.) Some partial safeguard is tutorial contact either by subject teacher or personal tutor in which the student is asked if he has academic problems. Unfortunately the weak student often denies that he has any difficulty, and without any evidence of written work yet available, no proof to the contrary is possible. The special position of overseas students was discussed in chapter one: some of them in particular do not admit to problems and do not seek help from teachers, possibly from reticence or the fear of losing face.

The teaching tutorial may merely be informal lecturing to a class which happens to be very small, but more properly

a tutorial is based on a piece of work which the student has done, or is doing, and ideally consists of one teacher and one student. Library schools may employ this method if, for example, they require a student to choose his own topic within subject bibliography and work out in some way the bibliographical structure of the subject. Clearly the guidance and checking needed during the progress of this work will be on a one-to-one tutorial basis, for no two students will be working on precisely the same topic. The same method can be applied to any other student individual work, and naturally becomes very important indeed for dissertations in higher degree work. Generally, however, economics dictate that one-to-one tutorial teaching must be limited, for it is extremely expensive on staff. Educational administrators argue that in the time given up to an hour's tutorial for one, the teacher could have lectured to 200 students. It is therefore unlikely that we shall see a widespread adoption by library schools of the Oxbridge system of teaching through tutorials.

Seminars and particularly tutorials are used fairly widely across the subjects in the librarianship curriculum, but the other participative methods tend to be special to some areas. It is virtually impossible to deal with them all: bibliographers will write bibliographical descriptions, cataloguers will have practical exercises, and palaeographers will produce transcripts. A group of methods can however be identified which are relevant not only to the generally accepted 'core' study of library management but to other subjects which have a management element, for example special services (to children, hospitals etc) administrative studies, and promotion of library use. These methods are practical exercises which seek to train the ability to make decisions. Of course the widely-used essay can do this *if the subject is appropriate*, but a greater sense of reality is brought to bear by the development of the project-and-report-method. Here the student (or a group of students) is required to investigate some real or imaginary library situation and to write a report on it. (The ability to write reports is an essential technique for librarians.)

The topic could be, for example, the need to introduce a loan service for sound recordings, and could be based on a real library which the students must visit and study. Another method, much less time consuming, and confined to the classroom, is the 'in-tray' exercise, where the student has to make decisions on imaginary correspondence, memos etc as might be awaiting the attention of a librarian in practice. More complex is the case-study, in which a description of a library situation is given and the student is required to decide the right course of action to solve the problem posed. The student often objects, in case studies and in-tray exercises, that he does not have enough data on which to make decisions, and this underlines the need for very careful and detailed compilation on the part of the teacher. A further participative method is rôle-play. Here students are asked to play out parts which simulate real-life library situations, such as a library committee meeting or the selection of a new member of staff. Finally the most sophisticated method must be mentioned, namely computer games, whereby the computer is programmed to respond to the decisions which the student feeds into it. Computers frighten some people, and I was not too censorious when over half my library management group failed to arrive for a computer exercise on library stock. Indeed I was apprehensive myself, but once started I found the experience fascinating.

An important characteristic of most of the methods which I have briefly described above is that they require the most careful and time-consuming preparation on the part of the teacher. To prepare a good, watertight case study is not easy, and it is obvious that making a computer game needs specialist skills, and cannot be done overnight. There is therefore a clear need for a cooperative approach by library schools, although it would probably be sensible to confine such cooperation to schools in the same country. In Britain this is happening with computer games, but there is wide scope for extension into case studies for example, saving considerable repetitive work in the various schools. The same applies

to visual aids such as slides, tape/slide presentations and video tapes.

Before looking at audio-visual aids, I would like to sum up the pro and con of participative teaching methods by describing an exercise I have organised for the public library management students on our current postgraduate course. It aims to give an insight into the selection of library staff, not only as part of management studies but as a practical aid in obtaining a post when the course ends. The sixty-six students are divided into six seminar groups of about eleven each. Phase one of the exercise was for all students to write an application for a library post. The details supplied to the students were for a real position recently advertised by a large nearby library system. Applications were passed to another group so that no-one was considering the case of himself or his immediate colleagues. A short list of four was decided on by each group. This phase of the exercise was successfully completed, and demonstrated to students the pitiful inadequacy of most applications as no exhortation could. For phase two I asked for four volunteers who would be willing to be interviewed for the same post by the practising staff who would do this in reality. The four students spent all day outside London at the library concerned, were shown around the library, given lunch, and interviewed exactly as if they were real contenders for the position. The interviews were video reorded so that the whole, or an edited version, could be played back to the whole class of sixty-six, possibly divided into groups. Note the considerable expenditure on equipment, travelling and staff time. Personnel involved were three senior members of the library staff, four students, the director and two members of the college Educational Development Service (for the video recording) and myself. I have recently seen the video tapes and I believe that something useful can be made of them for playback after this book is completed. But what if they are not successful? Then we should have invested heavily in staff and equipment for nothing, and in that case I would be justified in regretting that I had not merely given

an hour's lecture on the subject of being interviewed instead. But the optimistic view is that if successful the exercise will teach the students far more effectively than any lecture can. This is true of participative methods generally. An ironic and relevant footnote is that shortly after I had completed the interviewing and recording session I visited CLW at Aberystwyth and learned that they had done something very similar. Had I known, I might have borrowed their tapes and saved my colleagues and myself a great deal of work. Cooperation between library schools is therefore needed, not only to record work done, but to notify intentions to undertake work which may be of interest elsewhere.

The mention of video recording leads us on from teaching methods to a consideration of audio-visual teaching aids. My example shows how useful video recording can be, but it must be remembered that it is expensive and can be contemplated only by the institution willing to invest fairly large sums of money in equipment, materials (the tapes themselves are not cheap, but can be erased and re-used) and specially trained staff. A further problem in this early stage of development is that tape widths vary so that all systems are not compatible. This is a barrier to the necessary co-operation between library schools already mentioned, and may be an argument for waiting until there is more standardisation before installing a system. But waiting for the millennium is a good recipe for getting nothing done, so it may be better to negotiate an agreement with other library schools so that all purchase compatible equipment in the first place. Video recording takes over the function previously exercised by the home-made ciné film. There are few problems of standardisation in film, for either 8mm or 16mm would be used, sound or silent, but making a 16mm sound film in particular is a highly expensive and highly skilled operation, so that very few library schools undertake it. Instead they rely on ready-made films produced by other, larger organisations such as library associations and occasionally large libraries. The problem with the ready-made film is that the

86

teacher has no control over the content: it is rarely totally appropriate to his purpose, so that he often has to give some explanation or warning to ignore certain parts. Such films are therefore mainly used as a background to teaching rather than as a substantive part of the teaching sequence. They may be shown at the beginning or the end of courses, either as an introduction or as a supplement.

Next down the scale of complexity is the tape/slide presentation. A set of slides or a filmstrip is accompanied by a disc or more usually a cassette of spoken commentary. The two may be linked for slide change purposes automatically, or by an *audible signal which indicates when the slide should* be changed manually. It is possible that a teacher could make one of these without outside help, but he would be greatly assisted by an audio-visual unit, or at least a technician with the proper facilities. For many years I made sporadic attempts to produce a tape/slide presentation on librarianship as a career for free loan to schools, universities, etc. Without professional help *progress was slow,* and repeatedly the project had to be shelved when pressures of other more immediate matters became too strong. In the last year or so my college has built up an excellent Educational Development Service which covers, inter alia, audio visual aids, and my tape/slide sequence is now complete. The professional audio-visual unit not only has the facilities to get the job done speedily and efficiently, *but it has the* responsibility and the energies to do so, free from the pressures of teaching. If the library school has no access to a visual aid unit there is no reason why simple sequences of slides cannot be produced, for any teacher with a reasonably good 35mm camera would be willing to undertake this for his own subject as a labour of love. Slides have great teaching value, for being in tone (and usually in colour) they inject a sense of reality which can never come from a chalk drawing on the blackboard. They are second only to seeing objects in reality, and visits can be very time-consuming. I have found slides of great benefit in teaching modern book

production, where the understanding of unfamiliar machines is a problem. Slides and tape/slide sequences present no difficulties of compatibility wherever they are used, for the 35mm format is standard, as is the sound tape cassette.

We may now look at aids which are really no more than substitutes for the blackboard and chalk. The most sophisticated of these is the overhead projector, now in wide use. Compared with the blackboard it is clean to handle, and can be employed in the same way, by drawing on the machine with a marker in front of the class. Often, however, prepared transparencies are used, made either by hand or on a photocopying machine. Colours are possible, though not tone, and complex diagrams can be built up as the lecture progresses by the use of overlays. In a sense the need for preparation is a disadvantage, but a proper investment of time in making transparencies can pay off in a greater clarity and range of presentation than is possible with the blackboard. Moreover blackboard work must be done again for each repeat lecture: overhead transparencies can be stored indefinitely. The felt-board too need be mentioned, but it is not widely used. Again it needs preparation, and it tends to be employed by salesmen and company training staff as a slick, even gimmicky way to illustrate their repeated lectures on the same theme. I remember attending such a lecture once. I was highly delighted when the lecturer's foot inadvertently struck the leg of the easel, causing all the felt stickers to fall off, thus reducing the somewhat pretentious argument to bathos. There is, of course, a danger of gimmickry in all audio-visual aids, that is an urge to use them for their own sake rather than for the very real educational benefits they may bring if properly employed. Library school teachers are not immune from this peril. Recently I heard a first class lecture on audio-visual aids from a colleague in another library school. Because of the nature of the subject one would expect aids of all sorts to be demonstrated liberally, but even so I detected a trace of gilding the lily and even self-consciousness.

Perhaps the most humble substitute for the blackboard is the white board, a smooth plastic surface on which one

Before ending this long section on teaching in the classroom a few words need to be said on the rôle of the teacher, although much has been covered on this topic in chapter five on staff and chapter six on students. The functions of the teacher will vary in detail according to the subject taught, but in general his tasks are to organise, 'translate' and simplify. The ability to organise a mass of facts and ideas into an understandable structure has already been referred to when dealing with the qualities needed by staff. By 'translation' I mean putting material into librarianship terms, for much of the source data is not primarily intended for librarians. In management for example there is much writing geared to the management of industrial concerns and insufficient which is directly relevant to libraries: the teacher must therefore bridge the gap. In other subjects, too, aspects of interest to librarians need to be stressed because the literature is not intended to do so. Examples are computers, printing and micrographics. In these subjects quoted the third function of simplification becomes particularly important. There is an art in picking the meat out of a complex subject and presenting the students with a digestible meal instead of choking them on irrelevant technical gristle. Over and above these three functions the teacher should generate an interest in his subject. This flows partly from his own enthusiasm, partly from his own teaching skill, personality and style. The class will respond to the teacher as an individual, and there is an unpredictable chemistry at work so that the same teacher will find different responses from classes in different years. Sometimes I find that it takes a few weeks for a class to chuckle at my jokes, or indeed to appreciate that I am telling a joke at all: humour can be easily misunderstood. Different backgrounds can cause a misunderstanding of style too. A year or so ago I sat in on a colleague who introduced her lecture, in the British self-disparaging way, by querying her own competence to talk on the subject. She gave a most excellent lecture. Afterwards, a puzzled American student came to me querying

why the lecturer should have shattered the class's confidence in her ability. But she was seemingly the only student who felt thus.

A difficult problem is posed to the teacher when he has a class with a wide ability range. Should he pitch his level to match the aptitudes of his dullest students (on the principle that a convoy proceeds at the speed of its slowest ship), should he aim at the brightest pupils, or somewhere in between? Teachers will use all their skills in trying to find a meeting point with all the class at once, but sometimes this is impossible. If a choice has to be made, I would opt for teaching at the higher level at the expense of the slower students. This sounds callous, but if the interest of the bright students is lost it cannot be recaptured. On the other hand the less able student can be helped by extra teaching such as tutorials. And unfortunately some students will fail whatever efforts are made by the teacher, so that putting a brake on the whole class for their sake is not justified.

Out of the classroom

This section is concerned with those forms of teaching which take place outside the library school—visits, study tours and practical placements. Often within the library school, but outside the normal classroom is the library which serves the students of the school of librarianship. This may be the main university or college library with a special librarianship section, or it may be a separate library exclusively for the use of the school of librarianship. Obviously such a library must be good. Apart from serving staff and student needs as in any other discipline, a library school library will inevitably be looked to as a model. In this context the attainment of only minimum standards in stock, staff, space, equipment etc will not do, and it can be expected that librarians will use a library more heavily than staff and students in other subject fields. The school of librarianship library can usefully undertake a further teaching function, that of a demonstration library or workshop. Here a variety of techniques can be

displayed (for example different classification systems) and a wide range of equipment from varied manufacturers can be employed (shelving, lettering and display systems, book sleeves etc). The teacher may also arrange that students undertake some practical project in the library, such as book selection, cataloguing or a survey of book use. If circumstances warrant these demonstration functions could be separated from the main library of the school of librarianship.

Visits are popular with students as they make a break with classroom routine, and show the practical application of what has been studied theoretically. It is easy for the teacher, who has accompanied the same visits so many times before, to underestimate their value. But visits do take up a lot of time, particularly when travelling is taken into account, and they are not always as useful as they might be. Sometimes the 'briefing' arranged between the school and the library does not percolate down the staff hierarchy to the people who will be dealing with the visiting students, so it is not an infrequent occurrence to find some at least of the departmental heads totally unprepared. Sometimes too, there is a misunderstanding of what is required, even despite careful explanations. When taking my students on a visit to a printer I am lucky if I avoid the extremes of 'lithography is based on the antipathy of grease and water' (which elementary principle was assimilated long ago in the classroom) or minute operating detail such as the best way to lubricate a printing machine (which is not needed by students of librarianship). To minimise these problems of misunderstanding, careful preparation is needed, not only of the hosts, but the students attending. The students should be told what to look for beforehand, and there should be a 'debriefing' session afterwards in the classroom where difficulties can be cleared-up and attention drawn to important aspects which may not have been fully explained by the hosts or fully understood by the students. One could go further and issue the students before hand with a checklist of items to be looked at.

It is the generalised 'Cook's tour' type of visit which is specially prone to the misfiring and lack of preparation mentioned above. More specialised visits may be more purposive and are likely to be more structured and better prepared. Thus one may take students to a library not for a general look around but to see the book issue system for example. Or the form of the visit may be special, say to interview the chief librarian or other staff on some aspect of library policy. Specialised visits also include student projects of all sorts, where a small group goes into a library—with prior permission—to investigate some problem and make a report. An extended kind of project, merging into practical placement (which I discuss below) is where an arrangement is made whereby students take over the running of a small library or one of the library's services (say to children or housebound readers) for a short time.

A study tour is really a planned series of visits in a particular location. A week or fortnight—perhaps more—is spent on tour, and the costs of travel and hotel accommodation is such that not all students can afford to partake, for only rarely does a grant-giving authority fully reimburse the expense. Study tours are always beneficial, but they are virtually a necessity where the immediate library hinterland of the library school is poor. Of course this situation does not exist in London and the south-east of England, for the dense population and level of activity engendered ensures a wealth of libraries of all kinds within easy reach. But even a London-based school of librarianship finds it useful to run study tours to the north of England, for there are to be found some things not well represented in the south, notably large city public library systems, such as at Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield.

Whatever the local wealth of libraries, every library school will benefit from the foreign study tour. The costs will naturally be greater than for the home tour, and a bigger proportion of the time will be spent on travel, sightseeing and socialising. This is no bad thing, for no-one will deny the

general educational benefits of foreign travel or the more particular professional advantage of making contacts overseas. Also the student may acquire a wider comparative context for his studies. But since courses in librarianship are naturally biased towards the countries in which they are situated, the home study tour may be more useful to the student than the more glamourous foreign trip, if we are measuring merely the narrow advantage gained for final assessments.

Placement of students in libraries for a period of practical experience, sometimes called fieldwork, may suffer from those same problems which we discussed when dealing with visits. Here again proper preparation is necessary in the library school before the placement begins, some form of checklist or a reminder of things to look for is useful, and some follow-up ensures that the maximum benefit is gained. Library schools are grateful to practising librarians for their courtesy and the effort involved in taking students, but it must be said that just as in some visits, all the library staff concerned are not always prepared to receive the students. It is not uncommon to hear the complaint that 'when we reported for a week's spell in the referenee department the librarian was surprised to see us, did not know who we were or what to do with us'. Another problem, which arises from a misunderstanding of the purpose of a practical placement, is that students may sometimes be used merely as cheap labour. Admittedly a lot can be learnt by doing things, but little educational benefit accrues from an entire fieldwork period spent sticking labels in books. Necessarily many of the tasks given will be junior in level, and the librarian might reasonably expect some productive effort in return from the training he is giving, but there must be some training. The student will expect something more than purely routine duties for he is preparing himself for a professional position in libraries. He is therefore interested in aspects of the library which the junior assistant is not aware of. Some visits to other departments, talks with senior staff, and attendance at book selection and other meetings are called for.

Despite these occasional troubles it is generally accepted that practical placements are well worth while. Here is a point where theory and practice meet, and where students gain work experience, possibly for the first time in any library, or in a library of a particular kind. A bonus which some students gain after their courses end is a permanent post in the library in which they had their practical placement. To those students who have had no *experience of library work before their course*, for example first degree students, (see chapter six), fieldwork within library school courses is vital if young librarians are not to come on to the professional market with all theory and no practice. Even those who have had many years of library work before their qualifying course can benefit from a practical placement, for there is a difference between a planned training attachment and low-level library work which may or may not have much training element. These people may choose a type of library to contrast with that which they know well, but it is often wise to build on one's strengths rather than to range too widely. Thus a public librarian may feel that it would do him good to spend his practical placement in a special or academic library, but it might be more beneficial to the slant of studies which he has chosen to spend the time in the best example he can find, or at least a markedly different example, of a public library. The advice not to dissipate energies too widely is particularly important in intensive one year programmes. Of course a library may be chosen for a fieldwork placement for reasons other than because it represents a particular type of library. The reason may be *to experience one of the special services* (eg to children) and frequently the choice is prompted by the subject strength of the collections in a field of interest to the student, usually one in which he is making a subject bibliography study.

The practicalities of duration and timing of fieldwork need to be mentioned. Duration will depend largely on the amount of time which can be spared from teaching, although the host libraries may have some preferences. About four weeks a

year seems a reasonable amount, but my own one year post-graduate course can manage to spare only three weeks, while other courses squeeze it down to two. When students are asked about the optimum duration the reaction is mixed. The tendency is for those students whose placement has been an extended visit (learning by being shown and being talked to) to opt for a shorter time. There is a limit to the amount of demonstration and lecturing which is possible, or which can be absorbed by the student. On the other hand students who have become involved in the work of the library (learning by doing) often say that they could have profitably undertaken a longer placement. The best timing of the fieldwork period will vary according to local circumstances, but must take into account the needs of the library and the needs of the library school. Academic libraries will not welcome student placements in the frantic conditions obtaining at the beginning of the new academic year, for example. The library school will attempt to time practical work to gain the maximum educational advantage, and also to cash in on any fortuitous administrative convenience. Thus it may be arranged that a class is out of college when teachers are heavily loaded with the final assessments for another year of the course. There is very little room to manoeuvre in one year courses: clearly students cannot sensibly absent themselves from college too near the beginning or end of their studies.

Assessment

I am sure that students are not fully aware of the immense care taken by teachers and examiners in arriving at a fair assessment. Despite their fears that this may happen, students do not fail because of some slip in marking or in the addition of figures. Borderline cases are scrutinised by many people in an attempt to justify a few more crucial marks, but it is important to recognise that these marks cannot be found in all cases. If they could, it would merely mean that all scoring say forty-eight per cent would be deemed to have achieved the fifty per cent pass level, *so that the effective pass mark*

96

would be lowered by two points, leading to similar problems with those scoring forty-six per cent . . . The general task, then, of all concerned with assessment—teachers, those in charge of courses, external examiners—is to maintain an appropriate and even standard and yet to have the flexibility to give the student a chance to show himself at his best. Success in this difficult task depends on the regulations which may be laid down for guidance, and the wisdom and experience of those who apply them.

Course regulations, or examination regulations, reveal much variety in the mechanism of assessment. The pass level may be forty, forty-five, or fifty per cent, or in British first degrees in particular may be replaced by a series of classes. Surprising as it may seem, pass level does not matter. A forty per cent pass level in one course is not necessarily easier to achieve than fifty per cent in another, because the severity of marking is probably adjusted to compensate. It is possible to differentiate between pass and fail level work regardless of the marks awarded to them. The more crucial part of assessment regulations refers to the award of an overall pass or fail to those who do not achieve a satisfactory mark in each of the elements of the course. This problem is by-passed in arrangements whereby all marks in all subjects are totalled to determine an overall pass or class of degree, but even here, a very low mark in one subject may not be tolerated. This aggregation system has the advantage that subjects may be accorded different totals of possible marks, so that more important elements may be more heavily weighted. In the simpler alternative of the requirement to pass in everything, the regulations can still permit an overall 'pass by compensation' to a student who marginally fails in one or two subjects provided his work elsewhere is good. Another mercy is to allow one or two failed subjects to be re-sat later: this could be combined with pass by compensation for marginal fails.

There are however proper limits to lenience, for repeated resits of everything failed merely raises false hopes in the entirely unsatisfactory student. In suitable cases the examiners

may alter an assessment after holding an oral examination, and it is usual for them to be given much wider powers of discretion and mercy if it can be demonstrated that the student's studies have been affected by illness or hardship. It is important that pleas to the examiners on these grounds are made before a failure is known, if the suspicion of special pleading is to be avoided. Note too the problem of separate confidential student counselling, which denies the examiners the evidence they need for dispensation of mercy. This was referred to in chapter six. Another category often coming before the examiners for special attention is the overseas student. The difficult problems of his fair assessment were discussed in chapter one.

In British library schools all examining is now internal, that is the setting and marking of examinations and other forms of assessment are carried out by the teachers who have taught the students, subject only to monitoring and moderation by a small panel of external examiners. This is commonplace in universities and must apply widely across the world. Not so many years ago, however, we were still evolving from a system of external examining, whereby setting and marking of examinations were carried out by Library Association examiners with no direct contact with the schools of librarianship. One remembers the arguments used against the move to internal examining. It was feared that library school teachers would be tempted to show favouritism to their own students, that there would be an unevenness in standards between schools, and that, indeed, the content and treatment of what should be a standard qualifying course would vary from school to school. Experience has shown that there need be no fear on the first and second score, and that, given that standards are satisfactory, variation is healthy. Internal examining requires experience, and it may not yet be rightly applicable in all library school situations throughout the world, but there is no doubt that it should be the aim if not the reality everywhere. Only by this system can there be a proper correspondence between teaching and assessment.

The teacher can teach with reasonable freedom to select material and treatment in the knowledge that he can test the students on what he has taught. The old external arrangements abounded in mis-matches between teaching and examining. Sometimes the teacher misunderstood the examiners' requirements, sometimes the examiners had quite unrealistic expectations of what could be taught. Internal examining is much fairer to students, as this example, on the very simple level of nomenclature, will illustrate. One year in the days of external examining, I found that none of my students could answer a question on papermaking because it contained the term 'furnish' which they did not understand. Perhaps wrongly I had not used this word in my teaching, preferring the more explanatory 'raw materials'. Had the examiners used the same term, my students could have tackled the question.

A major consideration when drawing up a scheme of assessment for a new course is the relative weight to be given to written examinations and to the assessment of the various pieces of work which the student has produced during his course. The modern trend is quite rightly towards emphasis on course work assessment, but there is still something to be said for the examination. It is appropriate to test competence in covering a wide subject (library management for example) and it may be structured so that students must pay attention to certain important areas. (It can also be structured to allow for some subject specialisation). Examinations may also have some positive value in testing students under conditions of stress because of time limitations, for there are some students who can write a very pretty essay when they take inordinate time and wordage to do so, but are incapable of working to a time limit and keeping to a succinct presentation. Both these qualities are needed in practical librarianship, but it is true that both could be tested by forms of course work, a report or essay confined to a given maximum length, or an essay to be written in class on an unseen subject). Finally, in judging examinations as a

form of assessment one must recognise that they need not be of the conventional pattern where the student answers four out of eight unseen essay-type questions. The examination can be 'open' in that students are told of the questions beforehand; it may be appropriate to bring in materials (classification schemes etc) to the examination room; and questions can vary from the 'write short notes on three of the following' type to unseen case studies. These last however may cause a great strain in examination conditions.

Assessment of course work will vary in its format much more widely than written examinations: all depends on the type of student work which is being assessed. So marks could be awarded to essays, project reports, practical exercises such as cataloguing, notes in preparation for seminars, and many other items. We tread on much more subjective ground if we attempt to award marks for performance in seminars, and even more dangerous is a system of grading students on their achievement in fieldwork. Here one is heavily dependent on the reports of host librarians, with varying expectations, standards and contexts. The student who through no fault of his own has had an unsatisfactory placement will be at a grave disadvantage. In general, however, course work assessment is often far more satisfactory than examinations. If the assessment is made over a series of pieces of work marked throughout the course the student is aware of his progress and can make up for early weak work by better work later, possibly with the aid of remedial tutorials. Advice on work in progress can be given by teachers in a way impossible with preparation for an unseen examination. An enormous advantage from the student viewpoint is that the strain of sitting a series of written papers—on which everything depends—within a space of say a week at the end of the course is relieved. Some people suffer badly from examination nerves, others may be a little unwell: there are many reasons why students do not do justice to themselves in examinations. Assessment of course work does not in fact take away all tension, but merely transfers it so that

it is spread out throughout the course. This is well worth doing but there are possibly limits to the extent to which it can be done. In intensive one year courses the load of course work, which counts towards the final assessment, may become very great, and the load itself rather than the assessment may cause student failure. In my postgraduate course, a few students a year drop out because they cannot keep up with the course work requirements: indeed, about the same number as those who fail the final assessment at the end of the course. The Manchester school of librarianship has recently introduced a postgraduate diploma assessed entirely on course work. It will be interesting to see if this problem is encountered.

While it is common still to have assessment entirely by written examination, an assessment completely confined to course work (as at Manchester, mentioned above) is unusual. In many instances there is a mix between the two methods in an attempt to get the best of both worlds or because total course work assessment is not acceptable to some higher authority. This works satisfactorily save for one problem which we have found at PNL. If a student fails a piece of course work is he permitted to recover the position by re-writing and re-submitting it? Superficially it appears liberal to allow him to do so, but such a policy is in fact unfair. In any event re-submission is possible only of course work due to be submitted during the course of studies, for work due in at the end of the course will not allow time for re-submission before final assessments are drawn up, or indeed before the student has left. A special unfairness derives from the mix of assessments in our situation where students may choose from a range of optional subjects, some of which are assessed by examination, some by course work. If resubmission of failed course work is allowed, the student who has chosen an examined option will feel unfairly treated compared with his fellow who by re-submitting has had two or more chances of success to his one. We therefore do not allow re-submission of course work save in exceptional circumstances, but encourage

101

form of assessment one must recognise that they need not be of the conventional pattern where the student answers four out of eight unseen essay-type questions. The examination can be 'open' in that students are told of the questions beforehand; it may be appropriate to bring in materials (classification schemes etc) to the examination room; and questions can vary from the 'write short notes on three of the following' type to unseen case studies. These last however may cause a great strain in examination conditions.

Assessment of course work will vary in its format much more widely than written examinations: all depends on the type of student work which is being assessed. So marks could be awarded to essays, project reports, practical exercises such as cataloguing, notes in preparation for seminars, and many other items. We tread on much more subjective ground if we attempt to award marks for performance in seminars, and even more dangerous is a system of grading students on their achievement in fieldwork. Here one is heavily dependent on the reports of host librarians, with varying expectations, standards and contexts. The student who through no fault of his own has had an unsatisfactory placement will be at a grave disadvantage. In general, however, course work assessment is often far more satisfactory than examinations. If the assessment is made over a series of pieces of work marked throughout the course the student is aware of his progress and can make up for early weak work by better work later, possibly with the aid of remedial tutorials. Advice on work in progress can be given by teachers in a way impossible with preparation for an unseen examination. An enormous advantage from the student viewpoint is that the strain of sitting a series of written papers—on which everything depends—within a space of say a week at the end of the course is relieved. Some people suffer badly from examination nerves, others may be a little unwell: there are many reasons why students do not do justice to themselves in examinations. Assessment of course work does not in fact take away all tension, but merely transfers it so that

it is spread out throughout the course. This is well worth doing but there are possibly limits to the extent to which it can be done. In intensive one year courses the load of course work, which counts towards the final assessment, may become very great, and the load itself rather than the assessment may cause student failure. *In my postgraduate course, a few students a year drop out because they cannot keep up with the course work requirements: indeed, about the same number as those who fail the final assessment at the end of the course.* The Manchester school of librarianship has recently introduced a postgraduate diploma assessed entirely on course work. It will be interesting to see if this problem is encountered.

While it is common still to have assessment entirely by written examination, an assessment completely confined to course work (as at Manchester, mentioned above) is unusual. In many instances there is a mix between the two methods in an attempt to get the best of both worlds or because total course work assessment is not acceptable to some higher authority. This works satisfactorily save for one problem which we have found at PNL. If a student fails a piece of course work is he permitted to recover the position by re-writing and re-submitting it? Superficially it appears liberal to allow him to do so, *but such a policy is in fact unfair.* In any event re-submission is possible only of course work due to be submitted during the course of studies, for work due in at the end of the course will not allow time for re-submission before final assessments are drawn up, or indeed before the student has left. A special unfairness derives from the mix of assessments in our situation where students may choose from a range of optional subjects, some of which are assessed by examination, some by course work. If resubmission of failed course work is allowed, the student who has chosen an examined option will feel unfairly treated compared with his fellow who by re-submitting has had two or more chances of success to his one. We therefore do not allow re-submission of course work *save in exceptional circumstances*, but encourage

101

students to seek the guidance of teachers while they are writing their essays or other assessed work. The guidance goes as far as giving a quick look at the finished job, and particularly if it is likely to fail, indicating the weaknesses. But once the work is formally submitted and marked it cannot normally be done again.

A rather different problem of mixed schemes of assessment occurs when most but not all of the course work marks are taken into account in the final total or pass/fail decision. In these circumstances students are almost certain to pay less attention to those pieces of work which carry no final assessment marks. This is to be expected, and it is likely to show most markedly when students are under pressures of lack of time, as in one-year postgraduate courses. The remedy is to ensure that all course work undertaken carries marks for the total assessment (whether or not there are examinations in addition) but even this solution is not perfect. A student may do an uncharacteristically poor piece of work, perhaps early in the course when he has not set his standards correctly, or at any time if he fails to understand what is required of him. If all course work is counted at the end of the course his final mark will in the circumstances be pulled down. To overcome this, it may be possible to create a scheme of assessment whereby all work 'counts', but that the worst piece of work is discarded from the final assessment. (A snag is that all items of work must carry equal weighting.) The idea is a fair one because although no-one produces good work by mistake, there are many reasons why a student can hand in material which is untypically poor.

Finally there remains to be mentioned a form of assessment which has little to do with marks. This is the reference or testimonial in which the school of librarianship gives its account of a student for the benefit of a prospective employer. This sort of account is provided by schools of librarianship and colleges of all types in Britain and elsewhere, but it must be remembered that the 'transcript', widely used in the USA, is unknown in Britain. The two forms of

assessment are by no means different versions of the same thing. The transcript is a record of the marks or grades achieved in all subjects within the course studied: British colleges would not issue such a document because of their tradition that exact marks are not disclosed. The reference or testimonial does more than record academic achievement (which it does in a general way): it also evaluates the student's personal qualities and suitability for the post applied for. I have already made the distinction between a reference and a testimonial when dealing with student admissions (chapter six) and declared myself strongly in favour of the former because of its confidentiality. A reference must contain adverse comment, if warranted, even if it is only hinted at, and while past illnesses for example must not become a millstone around a student's employment prospects, it is unfair to a fellow professional for a teacher to suppress any relevant background.

There is pressure in Britain, not only in schools of librarianship but fostered by the growing student consciousness, to make assessments more 'open'. Specifically it is asked that the teacher's account of a student, particularly any adverse comment, is shown to, and approved by the student concerned. It sounds fair, but it is tantamount to returning to the virtually worthless open testimonial. It is quite certain that the result of this policy would be to give an unbalanced and over-rosy view of students which would be of little use to employers. The inevitable outcome would be that the real assessment would be communicated in a telephone call between employer and teacher. Is not an unrecorded phone message more sinister than a carefully thought out written statement, albeit confidential?

Teaching the organisation of knowledge

D W LANGRIDGE BA DipEd FLA

LIBRARIANSHIP is neither an art nor a science in any pre-
cise meaning of those terms. It is a service provided for a
community to meet their reading requirements, educational,
vocational and recreational. To perform this service librarians
must collect reading matter, which entails a knowledge of
what is available and how it is obtainable; they must organise
the materials for effective use, which entails a knowledge of
their contents and of the methods by which these contents
may be revealed; they must strive for the maximum use of
these materials, which entails a knowledge of their readers.
The organisation of knowledge is therefore a central concept
to librarianship. Its scope and aims are clear, while the most
effective methods are a matter for continuing debate and
research.

At present there is no general agreement on the most
appropriate name for a course designed to teach this subject.
The composite term 'classification and cataloguing' was long
unchallenged and is still in use. The main objection to it is
the emphasis on techniques rather than aims. 'Information
retrieval' and 'indexing' are more fashionable alternatives.
The latter is similar to classification and cataloguing but more
limited in connotation if not in intention. 'Information
retrieval' certainly defines an objective, but it is far too
narrow in connotation, failing completely to represent the
broad educational nature of the activities concerned. 'Organ-
isation of knowledge' is not as concise as one might wish, but
it is by far the best name that has yet been suggested.

Until recent times apprenticeship was the only form of training for librarianship. It remains a possible form and, at least as part of any individual's training, a *necessary* form. The existence of library schools does not eliminate the need for training on the job: the question is 'How shall the training be divided between schools and libraries?' The decision depends partly on the time available for the formal stage of study, but more importantly in knowing what is better done in one context rather than the other. The general answer to this is very clear: the schools should concentrate on fundamental principles, leaving the libraries to concentrate on specific practices. This does *not* mean that the schools are to be concerned solely with theory. Some practice should be part of any course, and theory can be taught in a practical way. The significant distinction is not between theory and practice, but rather between facts and values. It is important to decide on *the* proportion of factual material to be included in a course; it is even more important that students understand what is being taught *as* a matter of fact and what as a matter for judgement. For example, there may be time to *teach* only one form of alphabetical indexing for a classified catalogue. The details of using this form are matters of fact; its quality and appropriate conditions of use are matters for judgement.

The term 'library science' is often loosely used as a synonym for librarianship, where it should properly be reserved for the theoretical aspects of the profession. Librarianship is practical, like medicine or teaching, and it can be defined. It is impossible, on the other hand, to set any fixed limits to library science. Our practice may draw on any suitable body of knowledge, but none of this theory is *unique* to librarianship. No study is more fundamental to librarianship than classification and yet no study is more commonly applied. The continuing task of library science is to ensure that the theoretical foundations of practice are sound. New knowledge and new methods should continuously enter the profession through the schools and their associated research workers; the schools should be continuously aware of developments in

practice and the changing needs of the profession. The two functions should complement each other and, even if there is some overlap, there should not be any conflict.

Education for librarians and training for librarianship should not be confused. Whether both can be effectively mixed in a single course, as the new British first degree attempt, is a debate into which I shall not enter. What must be decided is the standard of general education and the amount of library experience required before embarking on a course; the knowledge and skills that should be attained by the end of the course; and whether contents or methods must be varied for particular types of student. In my experience the ideal student for a course in the organisation of knowledge is a postgraduate with some library experience. The experience is not *technically* necessary but *psychologically* desirable. Generally speaking, training courses are more effective for those who feel committed to a vocation and can readily understand the relevance of what is being taught. The standard of general education is more important, since techniques of classification and indexing are not independent of the subjects they serve. A degree is not essential. We all know about the 'public library graduates' of an earlier generation represented by such outstanding examples as Richard Church and Neville Cardus. For most people, however, a formal period of higher education is the easiest and most effective beginning to a lifetime's learning. Failing this, a prospective librarian needs several years of practice accompanied by wide reading before beginning technical library studies: a school leaver is not adequately prepared for this task. These are inevitably generalisations, and in practice the schools are now expected to deal with a wide variety of students. If my judgements are correct, however, they do have implications for different types of courses. In the main I shall concentrate on the common features of a first course, whether strictly professional, undergraduate or post-graduate.

The name 'classification and cataloguing' had at least one merit in suggesting a subject consisting of heterogeneous

catalogue entries. I do not think that this has been affected by increased centralisation and a corresponding reduction in the amount of cataloguing any particular person may expect to do. The primary reason for teaching practical classification and cataloguing in schools was never the production of cataloguers, but rather the training of *all* librarians in the *use* of catalogues. Not all librarians make catalogues or classification schemes, but they should all be expert in their use. Practical classification and cataloguing is taught in the belief that the most effective way to understand a system, including its limitations and defects, is to experience the processes of its construction.

This, then, must be the primary aim insofar as all students are concerned and there is no reason why a high degree of competence in the use of bibliographies and catalogues should not be achieved by the end of a course. The making of systems (catalogues, indexes, index languages) can only be a secondary aim and here one certainly cannot expect that a student will be highly competent by the time he takes up his first appointment. The most that one can attempt is to provide a sound introduction for the future development in practice of cataloguers and classifiers. Given a course of sufficient length it is possible that optional extra training may be given to some students, but certainly in a one-year postgraduate course there is little scope for that.

Time alone would ensure that not all classification schemes, all catalogue codes, all alphabetical indexing methods could be taught in one course. The suggested primary and secondary aims provide us with appropriate criteria for the choice of systems and methods to teach. Quite obviously they must be those that convey most effectively the principles underlying all similar systems. A person familiar with the principles relating to classification schemes, for example, will adapt quickly to any particular example he is required to use: the mere use of one scheme, however intensively practised, is not adequate preparation. Not all schemes are equally effective for the purpose. The widely used Dewey, Library of

Congress, and UDC all present considerable difficulty. Colon Classification, on the other hand, is an excellent teaching instrument—and so, presumably, will be the new edition of Bliss. Once we are clear about our objective we shall not make the mistake of rejecting Colon because it is virtually unused in the west. Doing so would imply a totally different criterion, that of familiarising a student with the system he will meet on going into practice. Even if desirable, this is a quite impossible aim, at least in Great Britain, where that first experience may be with any one of four general schemes, to say nothing of the innumerable special schemes in use. This is not to say that a student should be denied some introduction to the major schemes, but in a first course there is time for practical work in only one. For descriptive cataloguing there is no comparable problem, since the very widely used AA code is adequate for the teaching of principles.

For subject work, in any case, the major task is teaching the art of subject analysis. Even very imperfect index languages can be learned in a comparatively short time; understanding documents and their contents remains the most difficult part of the work however long one practises. It must be remembered, too, that what is said for analysis of documents holds also for analysis of users' queries. Fundamental principles are the same in both cases, but the practice is more difficult in dealing with the user, who is usually less clear and less organised than the text of a document. Training in subject analysis is therefore just as much training for reference work as it is training for indexing.

This matter of subject analysis raises the most difficult question relating to the nature of a course on the organisation of knowledge. What knowledge must a student possess before the techniques of subject analysis and indexing can be practised? Quite clearly they cannot be practised on nothing, and equally clearly the degree of knowledge possessed varies in general between different groups, such as school-leavers and post-graduates, and in particular between individuals. Given that first courses in librarianship are

109

catalogue entries. I do not think that this has been affected by increased centralisation and a corresponding reduction in the amount of cataloguing any particular person may expect to do. The primary reason for teaching practical classification and cataloguing in schools was never the production of cataloguers, but rather the training of *all* librarians in the *use* of catalogues. Not all librarians make catalogues or classification schemes, but they should all be expert in their use. Practical classification and cataloguing is taught in the belief that the most effective way to understand a system, including its limitations and defects, is to experience the processes of its construction.

This, then, must be the primary aim insofar as all students are concerned and there is no reason why a high degree of competence in the use of bibliographies and catalogues should not be achieved by the end of a course. The making of systems (catalogues, indexes, index languages) can only be a secondary aim and here one certainly cannot expect that a student will be highly competent by the time he takes up his first appointment. The most that one can attempt is to provide a sound introduction for the future development in practice of cataloguers and classifiers. Given a course of sufficient length it is possible that optional extra training may be given to some students, but certainly in a one-year postgraduate course there is little scope for that.

Time alone would ensure that not all classification schemes, all catalogue codes, all alphabetical indexing methods could be taught in one course. The suggested primary and secondary aims provide us with appropriate criteria for the choice of systems and methods to teach. Quite obviously they must be those that convey most effectively the principles underlying all similar systems. A person familiar with the principles relating to classification schemes, for example, will adapt quickly to any particular example he is required to use: the mere use of one scheme, however intensively practised, is not adequate preparation. Not all schemes are equally effective for the purpose. The widely used Dewey, Library of

general, then a conspectus of knowledge is indicated. No student can be assumed to possess this already, which means that some introduction to the nature and scope of knowledge is essential. This need was recognised and provided for by Ranganathan as long ago as 1949. He originally used the term 'universe of knowledge' for his subject, afterwards changing to 'universe of subjects' on the grounds that the former was a proper study for the philosopher rather than the librarian. I agree that a distinction exists, but there is a difference between what is created by philosopher or librarian and what they must know. The universe of knowledge is certainly the work of philosophers, but it is one of many disciplines outside the practice of librarianship which contribute towards its theoretical basis. In fact, a universe of knowledge course for librarians should also draw on other disciplines, such as history and sociology. The topic is open for debate and I can only give my own view after ten years of teaching such courses to students at different levels of education.

To begin with, the task is very much easier with postgraduate students. Many of these have specialised degrees, but the very experience of studying one subject in detail for three years provides an effective basis for more general study. Such students are familiar with the processes of producing and using knowledge. Even if they have not previously philosophised about their own subject they are prepared to undertake the task; and generalisation to other subjects is not too difficult. Knowledge is not one complete homogeneous unit: it contains a number of widely differing disciplines. Understanding of these differences is a necessary part of the study of general systems, such as public or university library catalogues, general classification schemes and national bibliographies. In a postgraduate course it is possible to teach general and special systems in parallel. On the one hand students can begin with an introduction to the universe of knowledge and to the general principles of classification and indexing, on the other, they can pursue a more specialised study of the users, documents and systems in their degree

110

subject, or any other subject of which they have comparable knowledge. That is to say for this part of the course their knowledge of the subject is taken for granted and instruction can be confined to library techniques.

Lacking the extra years of study and the detailed knowledge of one subject, the undergraduate is not ready for the general study of the universe of knowledge. Given the concept of degrees in librarianship, there are only two solutions to this problem: either a joint degree in which the librarianship studies follow the other subject, or the detailed study of a subject and its documentation problems preceding the study of general systems. A more fundamental question is whether the concept of degrees in librarianship should be replaced by that of degrees for librarianship. The philosophy, history and sociology of knowledge are examples of subjects that could be profitably studied at length before embarking on a one year postgraduate course in librarianship.

The subjects of knowledge do not exist in a pure form in isolated documents. Individual documents have significant characteristics other than the purely intellectual; documents are related to each other in a variety of ways. In other words, there is bibliography as well as intellectual organisation of knowledge. To make and use systems the librarian must be aware of the various forms in which knowledge is embodied as well as the nature of the knowledge itself. Subject bibliography is therefore the most closely related study in the librarianship curriculum to that of the organisation of knowledge. It is possible that the most effective way of relating the two subjects in teaching has yet to be discovered.

This apart, the organisation of knowledge is probably best seen as consisting of three forms of study: the historical-descriptive, the theoretical-analytical, and the practical. There are no laws governing the proportions of these or the order in which they should be taken. In practice there may be a good deal of merging. For example, I have yet to find a better way of beginning a course than with practical subject analysis of chosen documents from which one systematically draws out

111

the principles of classification and indexing. Ideally, practical work would include subject analysis of documents with translation into different forms of index language. Time may prevent the use of more than one example of each form, but at least one classification scheme, one system of subject headings construction and one thesaurus for post-coordinate indexing should be used. On such foundations can be built the theory of index languages and index construction.

The complementary form of practical instruction is the use of indexes, and although this has not generally received much attention in library schools there is no reason why it should not take up at least as much time as the making of entries. Given our primary aim of teaching the use of systems it is a matter of deciding the best proportion of time to be given to the direct method of searching practice and the indirect method of constructing entries—bearing in mind, of course, that the construction of entries also fulfils a secondary aim. In other words, indexing and searching may be variously practised for their own sake, but they both teach the same fundamental lessons. Another practical task with a similar double value is the construction of an index language for a chosen subject. It has value for its own sake, since some students at least will sooner or later be faced with such an assignment, and for the insight that it gives into the use of systems and effective provision for users.

Theoretical studies, whether combined with practical or independent, must cover four major divisions. Firstly, there are the elements of systems. These include the various disciplines and their characteristics, already referred to in the discussion of the universe of knowledge; the phenomena studied by those disciplines, the categories into which they fall and the relationships between them; concepts and words; and notations for manual or mechanical systems. Secondly, there are index languages: classification schemes, general and special; subject heading lists; thesauri for post-coordinate indexing; and the most recent examples, such as English Electric Thesaurofacet, which may be used for all purposes.

These last are an indication that there is now a general body of theory concerning index languages, as well as the details that are peculiar to any one form. Thirdly, we must be concerned with whole systems, their design and operation, such as the classified and dictionary forms of catalogue. These may be demonstrated with chosen examples for critical analysis and comparative study. The fourth category may be described as policy matters. It would include the choice of system to be used; the depth of subject specification required, ranging from the summary level of ordinary general library classification through varying degrees of subject indexing in special collections to the fullest subject description in abstracts; re-classification and re-cataloguing; and evaluation of systems.

These *analytical and practical studies* should form the basis of a first course in the organisation of knowledge. When a satisfactory programme for them has been designed, the remaining time is available for the historical-descriptive studies. This is most certainly not to decry the value of the latter, but merely to indicate priorities when time is limited. A comprehensive history of classification and cataloguing, together with a description of all important operating systems is quite beyond the scope of any possible course. Selection must be rigorous. History must concentrate on the most significant of past events, while current activities should be chosen to illustrate the major types of system in use, such as general and special classification schemes, national bibliographies, mechanised systems etc.

Teachers are always more important than methods of teaching. The latter are to some extent a matter of fashion. Those who like plenty of visual aids, for example, should use them, but they are not essential in teaching the organisation of knowledge. On the other hand, while lectures are not the most fashionable method of the day, they are good if the lecturer is good. There are certainly many books now available on all aspects of classification and cataloguing, but their very number gives at least one good justification

113

for lectures, whereby the experienced teacher can distil essential ideas that would take the student considerably longer to acquire by reading. In addition, of course, the lecturer can deal with recent developments, personal research and experience; can provide a coherent view of the subject, inculcate appropriate modes of thought and action, and by his own interest and example generate enthusiasm for his subject.

Another example of a fashionable method is programmed instruction. From my own experience it seems likely that the incidental benefits to the designer of such a programme will often be more valuable than the main product, since the work requires close analysis of the aims and nature of the course concerned. The end product may be no more valuable than an ordinary textbook covering the same ground, but if the work is done properly the course itself is bound to benefit from the kind of attention it receives.

Similarly with methods of assessment, the definition of aims is more important than the methods used. Experience has shown that continuous assessment has its disadvantages, particularly in the shorter, intensive courses. Objective tests are probably more valuable in our subject for diagnosis than for final assessment. Traditional examinations and long essays are not outmoded forms. Definition of aim is well illustrated in the case of practical tests. In using a classification scheme, for example, there are three distinct stages in the work: subject analysis of the document, translation into the appropriate class number of the scheme, and provision of suitable alphabetical index entries. Each stage requires a different skill and tests should be so designed that each can be separately judged and the real source of errors revealed.

Chapter 9

Bibliography as a core subject

C D NEEDHAM FLA

BIBLIOGRAPHY can be interpreted in a variety of ways, as a glance through any representative collection of books on the subject will quickly demonstrate. Here we are concerned with bibliography as a core subject, sharing that position with management and indexing, and the emphasis will therefore be on those aspects which are of most direct concern to the majority of librarians, and which are usually referred to as *systematic bibliography*. In broad terms systematic bibliography signifies both the processes of recording documents and the varied types of records thus produced. The focus here will be on current materials as these are the common traffic of most librarians. Other branches of bibliography—historical, critical, analytical, etc—will be ignored, not because their importance is underestimated but because in a core course they must usually occupy a relatively minor place.

In this chapter I shall be mainly concerned to identify the basic components of a course in systematic bibliography, whether for undergraduate or postgraduate students. There are, of course, differences between the two—differences which arise from the nature of the students, the nature of undergraduate and postgraduate studies, the length of the course and therefore the time available, etc. Nevertheless there are common elements and common problems of curriculum design and teaching method, and these will be the focus of attention here. I shall on occasion approach such matters historically, partly because I think this illuminates

the present situation, partly because I am anxious to suggest that things are by no means standardised but in a process of change. Many of our present educational practices in this field are in need of drastic overhaul. The historical approach should not mislead readers into imagining that older curriculum elements and methods are matters of the past: by and large courses have grown by accretion, the old and the new existing side by side. Finally, my examples of these things will be largely drawn from British practice, though experience suggests that the points being made have wider reference.

Materials

The study of materials has always been a central component of bibliography courses. Bibliography is the place in the curriculum where books appear. Not, however, books in general, but, rather, those non-books that are meant to remain unread, namely, reference books. For years the Library Association dominated professional education in Britain, and for much of that time public librarians dominated the councils of the Library Association. Bibliography examination questions revolved around reference books found in large public reference libraries, and questions on reference works tended to presume a public library setting. Examination paper titles like 'Assistance to readers in the choice of books' (1946 syllabus) are redolent of the public library.

In the 1950s there was still a 'best books' approach. Most student effort went into the learning of the best hundred (or however many) titles—best, that is, for public libraries, for best always begs a question. When students were asked to write short notes on EB, OED, DNB, CBI, etc, little beyond the memorising of salient features was possible. The approach was descriptive, the tenor uncritical, and students resigned themselves to rote learning. By the mid-fifties there was evidence of change. Nevertheless, in those days even the finals papers had their share of questions demanding little beyond a good memory.

We are the inheritors of that tradition, and it would be idle to pretend that we have even now freed our students

from drudgery. Nor would I wish to suggest that students should not get to grips with materials, far from it. What was wrong was the proposition that because librarians had to be familiar with certain basic reference books it followed that students had to sit down and 'learn them'. Two factors in particular were responsible for changing things: first and foremost, the expansion of full-time professional education; second, the growing influence of librarians outside the public sector. Although complacency is hardly called for, it can be said that there have been real improvements, both from the students' point of view and, ultimately, from the profession's. The changes have led to programmes that are, in the first place, rather more intellectually satisfying and, in the second, more wide-ranging and of greater relevance to all types of libraries. They may also be more effective in equipping students to meet future requirements.

Types of materials Of particular significance has been the shifting of interest from specific titles to types of materials. Textbooks which appeared for the first time, or in completely new editions, in the early fifties exemplify this change: Roberts' *Introduction to reference books*[1], Shores' *Basic reference sources*[2], and Malclès' *Cours de bibliographie*[3]. At the same time writings on the study and teaching of bibliography—those by Benge[4] and Staveley[5] for example—placed considerable emphasis on the systematic grouping of materials as a prerequisite for critical investigation. And the publication of Walford's *Guide to reference material*[6] at the end of the decade called into question the endless note-making on individual titles.

In educational terms it is more satisfactory to deal in types of materials (assuming appropriate categorisation—a point to which we shall return): to characterise the types in some detail; to show their particular functions; and to use individual titles as source materials for this work rather than to view them as isolated objects. But the trend could also be justified in practical terms. A question facing the reference librarian when dealing with enquiries other than those quickly answered by reference to known works is: in what type(s) of

material am I likely to find the answer? With practice the question may no longer be asked—at least not most of the time—but in teaching enquiry work it is a basic step. The study of types of materials, their characteristics and functions, is therefore closely related to practice. There is, however, a danger of oversimplifying this relationship—a point to which we shall return when considering the teaching of enquiry work.

The growing emphasis on types of materials had led naturally to a conscious extension of the range of materials studied. Comprehensiveness in terms of titles was never a possibility; in terms of types it was. Where once attention had been focused on such quick reference materials as encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, major national bibliographies, and the like, it began to range over specialised abstracting and indexing services, theses and research reports, government publications, non-book materials, patents, etc. The scope has widened to include such categories as primary source materials, textbooks, advanced monographs, popularisations, publishers' series—indeed, any kind of recorded knowledge. And not just recorded knowledge. 'Materials' has become 'sources of information' and the student is increasingly exhorted to view all kinds of organisations as potential suppliers of information. These extensions have been a factor in shifting the balance of emphasis toward bibliographic forms (the sources of sources), and in furthering subject studies, many types (eg indexing and abstracting services) being best illustrated by reference to subject fields.

But if an extended range is, at least in part, a consequence of focusing on types, unification of study has also been promoted. Where growth of titles would have led ultimately to divisions reflecting the stocks of the different forms of libraries, categorisation has allowed standardisation of courses while providing for variety among examples. It has been said that it now no longer matters which titles the student chooses to study—they could be related to subject interest, type of library interest, personal interest, etc—so

long as all students study more or less the same types of materials. Like many broad generalisations this tends to be a somewhat dangerous half-truth.

Subject studies The changing climate has been most marked in the development of subject studies. From slight beginnings in the fifties when all but a very minor element of specialisation was opposed by the profession (despite strong educational arguments), subject bibliography suddenly blossomed in 1964 with the establishment of 'List C' in part two of the professional examinations.[9] Through this list of some twenty-five subjects the Library Association attempted to cater for specialised interests while retaining unity of direction, the assumption being that, regardless of subject field, there existed a more or less standard range of types of materials.

This notion had been widely accepted among teachers following the publication of a number of syllabus outlines and guides, some of which have been noted above. It was clear that, with adjustments, recurrent *forms* and *patterns* of material could be traced at a variety of levels—general, broad field, discipline, and sub-discipline. Courses were devised to drive home this view of things. Quite quickly a valuable perception ossified. Students were subjected to unenlightened searchings for examples of this or that type of material at a number of levels, in a variety of subject fields. The *differences* between subjects were minimised. Too easily it was assumed bibliography in a particular subject was defective if particular categories were lacking. It was but a short step from claiming that there must be something defective about the 'users' also! (Particularly unfortunate was the tendency to select scientific documentation as a model.) And so, all too easily, things were turned inside-out—patterns of bibliography took on a greater reality than the people, on whom, after all, their significance rested. Such formalisation is still in evidence and will remain so whenever the study of materials pays scant attention to context.

None of this can be laid at the door of those who had originally fought for *greater systematisation*—though, faced

119

with some opposition, they may have overstated their case. Indeed in Staveley's case quite the opposite was intended: the stress in his writings has always been on the individual, unique relation between author and reader.[10-11] And in Benge's work there is a long-standing concern with social aspects of bibliography that would scorn arid systematisation.[12]

Dissatisfaction with the day-to-day drudgery of 'type-bashing' led many teachers (and many who lacked any particular ideological standpoint) to embrace the new opportunities for individual project work which was allowed in the late phase of the Library Association's control, and which has been a very significant element in the newer undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Highly favoured among individual work programmes is the compiling of bibliographies; we also have the handling of enquiries in case-studies, literature searching, etc. It may be that significant numbers of students are today getting no systematic view of bibliographical organisation in a subject field.

Certainly general bibliography has suffered. Ferreting among particulars of their chosen subjects has greater appeal to students than puzzling over the more nebulous ideas of general bibliographic organisation; and the increase in the graduate intake and the creation of undergraduate courses with strong subject elements has greatly added to that appeal. For many full-time teachers too, often (and for good reason) selected during the last ten years on the basis of their specialist subject knowledge, general bibliography is a somewhat elusive, peripheral area. Again, many staff have embraced an educational tenet highly favourable to individual work in subject areas—namely, that education should focus on the individual student and his (preferably) self-generated interests, the teacher's role being that of guide and counsellor. This viewpoint, subtly and attractively expressed by Ronald Staveley, has demoted systematisation and generalisation in the form of traditional lecture programmes and structured courses. 'What truly matter are the student's meetings with

authors, tutors, fellow-students, librarians, library-users . . .
Lecturers with packaged lecture deals can only obstruct this.[113]
In such circumstances most students stick to the familiar—
their subject field—and are in fact encouraged to do so.[14] If
taken to extremes general materials will be encountered only
obliquely as sources for subject studies. Although in some
fields and for some purposes such materials are more efficient
than the subject sources themselves, the extent to which stu-
dents will be alerted to their existence will depend rather
heavily on the awareness and thoroughness of the tutor. Not
surprisingly there is great variation in this respect from one
subject to another. But even the most conscientious tutor
cannot by this means give the student a systematic survey of
general bibliography. Most courses don't go to such extremes,
but in most the emphasis is now on subject bibliography; and,
though general bibliography courses may be provided, they
are usually subordinate, if not officially then in terms of the
students' attention.

All of which has been lent support by events. For many
years after the Second World War it was in specialised areas—
in special libraries, specialised indexing, subject bibliography—
that much of the most exciting work was taking place. Uni-
versal bibliography was a dead duck, and in national biblio-
graphy Larsen[15] and Unesco seemed to have said the last word
by the mid-fifties, leaving room only for consolidation. Re-
cent developments have, however, considerably modified the
picture. With automation, the dreams of Otlet and La Fontaine
have for the first time some chance of being realised: EURO-
NET, UNISIST, UBC, MARC, the British Library, regional
networks, large-scale systems like MEDLARS. . . many stu-
dents look upon it with glazed fascination—but at least it
isn't a moribund area any more, and we are being forced,
some more willingly than others perhaps, to modify the
balance between general and subject bibliography.

To sum up. The study of materials has always been at the
centre of courses in bibliography. From enumerative studies
it has moved to the study of types of materials, and general

bibliography has given way to subject bibliography (though this may, as indicated, be changing). Courses have increasingly emphasised analysis rather than description, and examinations have been supplemented by individual assessed-work projects, further reducing the amount of memorisation. These changes are trends: courses can be found representing all phases, and in most the distinctions are not clear-cut but matters of emphasis. As we have seen, there are elements of conflict in the trends—those toward individual project-work often conflicting in practice with the tendency to systematisation.

Bibliographic organisation

There has been in recent years a tendency to use the terms 'bibliographic organisation' and 'bibliographic control' as labels for courses in systematic bibliography. The significance of this varies. It may be no more than a sign of recognition of the ascendancy of bibliography in courses that had been on major types of reference materials and in which bibliographies had a much smaller part. Or it may be the term 'organisation' that carries the stress, the focus being the categorisation of bibliographies referred to above. It may, however, mean more than either of these—and in some quarters much more. It may be an expression of the view that bibliographies constitute a system, the parts being inter-related whether by design or otherwise, the whole standing in some sort of relationship with the social system that envelops it.

All three interpretations are closely related and, though they co-exist, it could be argued in historical terms that each has been a consequence of its precursor. Take the categorisation of bibliographies. Many different classifications have been created on the basis of such dichotomies as general-special, current-retrospective, comprehensive-selective, author-subject; and such conventional categories as indexing services, abstracting services, literature reviews, contents lists, and so on. But if this is to be more than a game objectives have to be carefully considered. And this seems to lead straight into questions regarding the relationships between bibliography

and society which, at least in the climate of the last twenty years, are likely to be viewed in terms of 'systems'.

Attention to the objectives of bibliographic organisation has led to the *use of the term 'bibliographic control'*. Control (when not used loosely as a synonym for organisation) is considered to be the *purpose* of the organisation. This idea can be clearly seen in that influential book of 1950, *Bibliographic organisation*, edited by Shera and Egan.[16] But what is meant by 'control'? A common answer to that question would suggest that bibliographic control is a condition in which documents can be identified, selected, and located as required. On such a basis we can posit basic comprehensive lists (for identification), select and annotated lists (for selection), and union lists (for location). We can go further and lay down that such lists should be provided for different kinds of materials (monographs, periodicals, etc.), whether in general or in particular subject fields. We can say that among such lists we should find a variety of approaches (by author, subject, title). And so on . . . We are, of course, back to a kind of formalism. All roads have the same destination if our starting point lies *within* the world of documents or documentation, the inevitable result of which is a confounding of functions and objectives. Thus, having established in the manner described above that indexing services are required because periodical articles need listing, the purpose of indexing services is said to be the listing of periodical articles. There is an element of this in the otherwise unmatched systematic account of bibliographic control in a subject field, the Chicago Report.[17]

To suppose that purposes can be born within the world of documents and documentation is a fundamental error. This is the world of functions. Nothing we do as bibliographers can have any significance in itself, but only insofar as it serves a purpose beyond itself. (In the above definition of bibliographic control the crucial phrase, too often ignored, is 'as required'.) Nor can our purposes be defined in terms of documents, for documents are simply agencies of communication serving, in their turn, writers and readers (or, more

123

widely, producers and users). Objectives can be defined only in relation to people and the interchange of ideas in the widest sense. Which is presumably what Ranganathan meant when he stated that books are for use and that we should ensure that every reader gets his book and every book its reader.[18] (The last two call for the retrieval and dissemination functions of library and bibliographic services.) A somewhat simplistic reduction of this would be to say that the purpose of bibliography is the meeting of needs (which may or may not take the form of requests). Only by couching our objectives in such terms have we a chance of escaping the circularity and formalism which infect all bibliography courses today and which, if taken to extremes, would render them meaningless.

Care is still needed, however, because it is easy to pay lip-service to 'need' and then turn again along the old road. For example, we might say: people need periodical articles irrespective of source and according to, say, subject covered. Control will be achieved when all articles (on a subject) are collocated in one bibliography (or interrelated series of bibliographies). Such a bibliography—commonly referred to as an indexing service—is therefore a necessary device in bibliographic organisation. Bibliographic organisation is then interpreted as the provision of such devices as are necessary for recording (and thus controlling) the various forms of publication, whether in general or in a subject field. This is lip-service to the idea of need and it will get us nowhere. It won't, for example, tell us which periodical articles to include; how to arrange and index them; what kinds of descriptive details to provide; how often the bibliography should appear; etc. In fact, none of our basic functions can be determined when statements of need (and therefore objectives) lack precision and detail.

We must go back a step and ask why people need periodical articles—which ones, when, how often, etc. Even this is not enough, because people never, I imagine, want periodical articles as such—the question 'What periodical articles have

124

you got?' isn't met. Nor even periodical articles on a particular subject. The basic need (at any rate when it isn't a case of wanting a specific article) is for information, inspiration, etc, for a specific purpose. *It is these specific purposes and attendant needs that are the starting point for bibliography*, whether our concern is design or criticism, practical work or analysis. Anything else can only lead to irrationality, the commonest form of which is the unquestioning acceptance of the status quo.

Those who would practice bibliography must, as a first requirement, be able to get under the skin of their clients, actual or potential, whether conceived of as individuals singly or as groups sharing characteristics significant in bibliographic terms. Such considerations, arising from the idea of bibliographic organisation but incapable of being answered in its terms, have led to an ever mounting pile of investigations into users and communications. To these we must now turn.

Communication systems and users

The need to set bibliography in a wider context has been noted for many years. The Chicago Report itself included a small survey of social scientists to try to establish requirements empirically. This was in tune with the general tenor of work in Chicago during the immediate pre-war and post-war periods. And in the writings of Shera and Egan, a major example of which has already been cited, we find a keen awareness of the broader questions that underlie bibliographic organisation. It is this awareness which makes their *Foundations of a theory of bibliography*,[19] published over twenty years ago, still one of the most perceptive and stimulating papers on the subject. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that such writings are the exception rather than the rule. Generally speaking bibliography, both in practice and as a curriculum subject, has remained relatively isolated, a self-contained world of materials and listings.

Though it is difficult to ascertain just what goes on in bibliography courses, teaching has seemed remarkably impervious to ideas and research which, whatever their limitations, are of

125

some relevance and suggestive of potentially rewarding new directions. The work is scattered and it is high time that the various strands relative to bibliography were brought together, if only as a basis for a more informed assessment.

One strand, for example, comprises the various 'relevance studies'. The Cranfield[20] and MEDLARS[21] tests are but peaks in an extensive terrain explored by indexers and appropriated by them (or, more correctly, allowed to remain almost solely in their hands). Surely this doesn't have to be said that the study of index languages is a central aspect of bibliography. Lancaster's evaluation of MEDLARS alone should be enough to demonstrate that we are, in such studies, confronting basic questions concerning the arrangement of bibliographies, the formulation of enquiries, search procedures, the evaluation of bibliographies and enquiry services, etc. One of the knotty problems in all this work is the definition of relevance and this has generated a considerable literature with contributions to suit all tastes, whether theoretical, philosophical, mathematical, empirical, speculative, or ruminative. It all needs carefully sifting and assessing for curriculum purposes.

A closely related strand is that of user-studies.[22] The major problem here, and one which has also generated debate, is the definition of 'need'—and what is this if not the question of relevance in a new guise? Relevance studies and user studies, though coming from different quarters and superficially unalike, have, when pared down to the essentials, the same focus, namely, the relationship between people and needs on the one hand and, on the other, the services we create to meet those needs (ie to provide relevant materials). As in the case of the relevance studies the literature needs careful sifting before the work can be incorporated into the curriculum—incorporated adequately, that is, and not just as a detached account of another area of research.

This is, in fact, one of the main difficulties facing teachers who voyage beyond the traditional boundaries of bibliography curricula. That we have not found adequate solutions is evident in the way in which our curricula are increasingly

stippled with unassimilated matter; and I would wish it to be understood that I am not suggesting something that could be blown up into research method; nor, indeed, on relevance and user studies as such anything more than the odd lecture or two. What I am saying is, first, that the fundamental notions of need and relevance, recall and precision, etc, should be introduced early and discussed more fully toward the end of the course in the light of key readings; and, second, that the empirical data, anomalies and uncertainties notwithstanding, should be effectively *used* throughout the course—for example, when discussing the various types of materials and their use, bibliographic services, enquiry work, SDI, etc. All of which is easier said than done.

The difficulties increase when we move into other kinds of communications research. Relevance studies and user studies are, of course, species of communications research, their centre of interest being an aspect of the 'formal system'. Information on this system is also available in the various kinds of bibliometric studies[23-25] (those, for example, charting the growth of literature in a field[26] and the citation studies which, despite problems of interpretation, throw light on the patterns of documentary communication[27-28]). Again, there are the growing numbers of economic analyses of 'information transfer', which are hardly marginal to our interests.[29] And there is of course an extensive literature on the book trade. The relationship between formal and informal systems, particularly in subject fields, is a topic we would do well to consider, not only to avoid an exaggerated view of our role but also to discover the uses and relative merits of each.[30] More broadly, the significance to us of work on innovation,[31] mass communications, opinion research, etc., though also not unnoticed, has yet to be properly assimilated: documentation services exist against a background of mass communication, and studies of library and information services suggest that such factors as class, locality, education, sex, etc, are common influences. From here it is but a short step to writings in the sociology of

knowledge.[32] And why stop there? Can one properly interpret the sociology of knowledge without a grounding in sociology? And how about such matters as the structure of knowledge, the nature of disciplines, knowledge and linguistic forms, etc?[33] Are not these of some consequence for those organising recorded knowledge? Last, but not least, there is the range of writings which contribute to our understanding of author-reader relations as conceived by Ronald Staveley.[34]

Are we here in a kind of infinite regress by which bibliography comes to mean everything—and nothing? I think not. All we are saying is that bibliography can be illuminated by a wide range of studies—but its boundaries remain more or less distinct. We are not suggesting that much, if any, of the 'external' matter be introduced as such into bibliography courses, or indeed into the curricula of first professional courses in library schools. To set up courses labelled Knowledge or Communication or Society is to invite insuperable relevance problems and to ensure that bibliography, deprived of its most potent source of criticism and renewal, remains a technicality, and a sluggish technicality at that. It is for the teacher to range among subjects as widely as opportunity allows; it is for the teacher also to assimilate his findings and to incorporate them into his bibliography courses as appropriate. Only when it becomes clear beyond any shadow of doubt that certain matters need discussion for their own sake should we be tempted to set up courses in 'alien' fields—and even then the briefer the better. They should be placed, generally speaking, toward the end of the course, avoiding above all things 'fundamental years'.

The main point is that the student should, by the end of the course, be aware of relevant work outside our traditional domains, and aware in such a manner as to be encouraged to continue tapping external sources throughout his professional career. And this will be achieved—I am tempted to say that it will only be achieved—if the teacher has not merely made statements about, but *demonstrated*, time and again, the significance to us of such work.

128

That may suggest a course too dominated by the teacher. If so I hasten to correct the impression. The relationships have to be experienced by the student. One of the most fruitful ways of providing for such experience is the individual subject study. I refer not to exercises of a practical nature such as the compiling of bibliographies, but to the systematic examination of the needs of particular groups of users, their social organisation and modes of communication, and, on this basis, the critical review of bibliographic services. Many variations can be played on this kind of project work, so long as the project remains sufficiently concrete to allow students to get to grips with the data and the relationships, and to prevent escape into broad and windy generalisation. The snag is that once again the subject field has been made the focus of interest, and while it must be *a* focus steps should be taken to prevent its becoming exclusive. Other user-groups should be considered—eg occupational groups, age groups, etc, or even groups defined in terms of users of a particular kind of service. Anyway, it is important that the teacher encourage the student to see this work as a means to an end: the substance is the relationships, not the subject, and the approach should be critical and creative. In my experience it is possible to get original work done on these lines even in first professional courses.

Finally, passages in this section may have suggested that research materials (on communications, etc) are the major sources of information for this work. If that were the case many worthwhile projects would fail to qualify. Much of the best material will be of a speculative nature, and it will often be necessary for the student to glean relevant information from such sources as the curricula of educational institutions, textbooks in a field, documents laying out the aims and objectives of organisations, subject periodicals giving 'news and notes', etc. A good deal of the student's time will be spent browsing among such materials and learning to make valid or, at least, plausible deductions about the behaviour of users and their information requirements. As he will undoubtedly

129

have to make such deductions in the course of his professional career, this is, in itself, valuable training.

The problems of fragmentation

As soon as one begins to set bibliography in its wider context the fragmentation inherent in the tripartite core of the curriculum is clearly seen to be a great barrier to the development of ideas. The professional conditions in which these divisions originated no longer exist and yet in most, if not all, schools bibliography, indexing, and management stand firm. Even when the need to relate is recognised—as, for example, in the old 'List C' syllabus of the Library Association—we seem to get little further than juxtaposition. I have discussed elsewhere the general consequence of this fragmentation[35].

From the point of view of bibliography the isolation of indexing is particularly unfortunate. Inevitably students (and, for much of the time, staff) relate indexing to the organisation of materials in *libraries*. You can tell students till you are blue in the face that the arrangement of bibliographies is also indexing but the fact of the matter is that they (and a good many bibliography teachers) will continue to see the problems of arranging bibliographies in terms no more sophisticated than those enunciated by Pollard[36] at the turn of the century. The void yawns when students try to analyse or to prepare strategies for searching abstracting and indexing services and large-scale bibliographies like the *London bibliography of the social sciences*, the *Cambridge bibliography of English literature*, etc, but the failure is no less real in dealing with less complex tools. I have seen students fresh from lectures on featuring, chain indexing, etc, lapse into language that would shame an intelligent layman when discussing *BNB*. It is also well-known that the close connections between the mental processes involved in indexing a document and handling an enquiry are rarely seen, let alone fruitfully explored. Curricula structures dominate patterns of thought: indexing is clearly *not* bibliography.

130

Indexing also suffers. In particular, deprived of the immediate context that bibliographies could provide, it is encouraged in its natural tendency to elevate procedural rules into universal *principles*. Still, *that isn't our concern* here.

The separation of bibliography from management, the latter being the usual place for the treatment of library services, also leads to undesirable fragmentation, as, for example, in the study of the selection of materials. The handling of enquiries is dealt with in bibliography, but the organisation of such work in libraries is in management: thus bibliography lacks the crucial aspect of library context *while managing*, lacking the kernel of service, turns to husk. (Bookmen and administrators are born in library schools.) Certain operations, especially dissemination, hover uncasily between management and bibliography, and sometimes end up in indexing, especially when the latter is called retrieval.

And so on. In the paper referred to above I suggest that the way out of such difficulties is, first, to rationalise the treatment of our services and, second, to make context the core. In brief, libraries and bibliographies are the two ways (with which we are directly concerned) of dealing with materials: storing and recording virtually exhaust the possibilities. (*In this context I would include oral communication relating to materials as an extension of bibliography.*) In both libraries and bibliographies the basic operations are the same: selection, indexing, retrieval, and dissemination. In all of these classification is the fundamental intellectual process. All services, whether bibliographic or library, have to be managed. As all these things are, in essence, designed to deal with documents, we can label them documentation. Documentation is a part of the wider world of documentary communication, this being itself a part of communication generally. Communication is an aspect of the world of *people and ideas*. Figure 1 presents this in diagrammatic form.

I suggest that this model is capable of accommodating most, if not all, of the curriculum content of library schools. It is not, of course, an outline curriculum but, rather, a basis

131
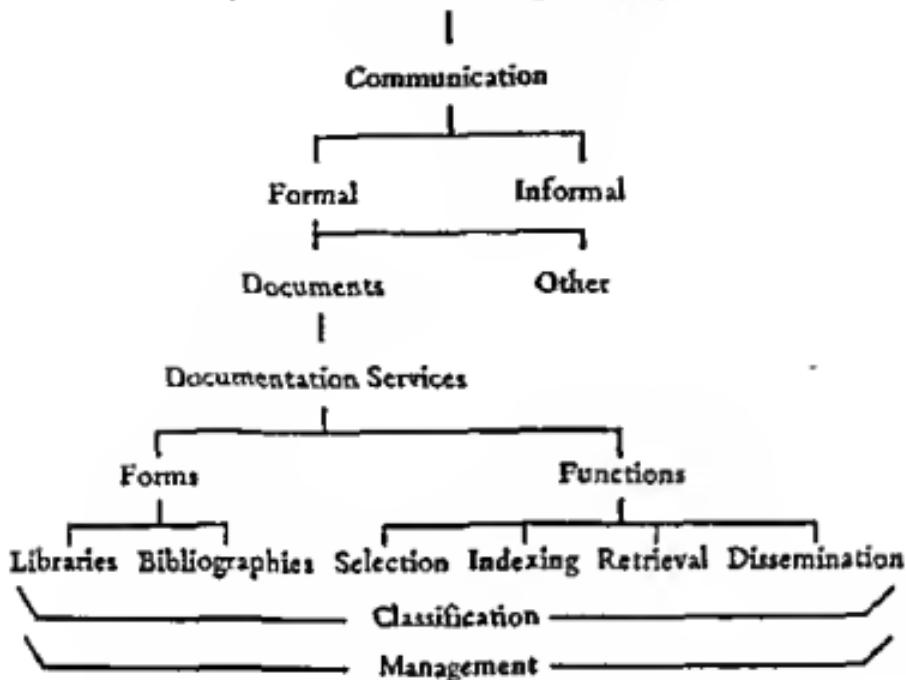
Figure 1: Curriculum elements–to be set in specific contexts

for the design of one. Moreover, it lacks a vital dimension: context. None of the components is open to rational discussion unless set within a particular context. One such context would be subject. The choice would immediately make concrete the purely potential world labelled 'people' and 'ideas'; information needs would become more clearly visible, as would associated communication patterns and media. In consequence there would be established a sound basis for decisions at all levels of documentation, the sold aim of which is to serve people and ideas. Of course, people and ideas may also be defined in terms of the service: not subjects now but, say, 'the actual and potential uses of industrial libraries'. Once defined the model provides the basic components for the design of a syllabus. We could probably arrange our contexts in a series of levels, a kind of continuous spectrum, from the least well-defined levels (eg

the international community, the national community), through well-established and quite extensive special groups (subject, occupational, etc) to small groups and individuals. It would be important for each student to work at several levels during his course of study.

In a curriculum organised on contextual lines the essential problems underlying particular processes and services, whether library or bibliographic, would become visible, allowing fruitful criticism and analysis. Documentation principles and techniques would not, as a result, be underestimated: on the contrary, given the kind of situational reference necessary for the making of decisions, their true significance would be clarified.

Practical work

I have made passing reference to various kinds of work commonly expected of students on bibliography courses. Such work is designed in part to promote understanding of matters discussed above—types of materials, bibliographic organisation, communications, etc. The typical form here is the critical essay, and a full project for assessed work may comprise a series of such essays, together ranging over major theoretical aspects of bibliography, usually from a specific angle chosen by the student (user-group, subject, etc). I have described such work elsewhere.[27] It is possible to integrate it with the various kinds of practical work to which we must now turn—though the greater number of objectives to be met by any single programme the greater the need for close supervision.

However packaged, practical work in bibliography is intended to encourage a feeling for good craftsmanship: at its most basic, technical competence; at best an ability to define purposes and to appropriate and modify techniques accordingly. The fundamental difficulty of practical work in a library school setting is the absence of actuality. It is high time that teachers and practitioners got together to create conditions for controlled practical work of a kind

found in the education of doctors or teachers. The point has often been made; it remains one of the two or three most serious criticisms of education in our field.

Particularly deplorable is the absence of actuality in the study of enquiry work. There is an unfortunate tendency to regard enquiry work as the answering of questions. (It is a tendency that has infected even research work—see Lancaster's comments.[38]) To give students questions and to concentrate the assessment of their work on whether they have found the answers is to establish a cast of mind that will be eradicated only with difficulty. And yet, much training in reference work has been little more than this. Given seminar or tutorial discussion a good teacher can minimise the adverse effects by insisting on a detailed 'blow by blow' account of the steps taken, and by questioning students' assumptions at every turn—thus to some extent transforming the answering of a question into the handling of an enquiry. But there is no effective substitute for the 'live' situation *and* associated analysis. (Practice doesn't make perfect.)

The case study is an attempt to get closer to that situation. Good cases are difficult to come by. However closely modelled on actual situations the account will transform it, and a sense of artificiality is hard to avoid. The greater the striving for verisimilitude the louder the creakings, until a point comes when the intention is wholly defeated. Some American cases come dangerously close to this.[39] Even when there is a more or less willing suspension of disbelief, a further problem is the curtailment of opportunity for generalisation through the multiplying of particulars in circumstances which, in contrast to living situations, preclude any true assessment of their degree of inconsequentiality. A teacher has to be more than ordinarily competent to handle such enquiries with a group of students—which is not the same as saying that the sessions won't be fun.

Grogan's cases are probably more representative of British practice.[40] The emphasis here falls on the searching. Artificiality and inconsequentiality are avoided but so, too often,

134

are the reader and the enquiry, and one is left with a question and an account of the search for answers. They can be used to generate valuable discussion of search strategies so long as the teacher sees it as his duty to add flesh and blood and to temper easy generalisation. I have always thought it a pity that these cases are arranged primarily by form of materials, thus encouraging the constraining view that there is a one-to-one relationship between materials and enquiries. A further duty of the teacher must therefore be to demonstrate how different types can often be used for the same purposes, thus instilling the kind of flexibility that comes from being aware of the complex relations between enquiries and materials.

This last point may not be wholly conceded by teachers of bibliography, many of whom see in the provision of practical enquiry work a way of making students familiar with types of materials. The systematic examination of encyclopedias thus goes side by side with enquiry work designed to get encyclopedias used. The idea is certainly attractive—and perhaps the risks are small so long as teachers are aware of them, and so long as not *all* enquiry work is focused in this way.

Which leads me to another important aspect of practical work: the assessment of materials. The time-consuming and somewhat laborious examination of particular works has come to seem rather old-fashioned, and there is a danger that we may pay less attention to it than we ought. In my view the ability to get to grips with a work—to analyse it succinctly and in depth, to assess its merits and uses, to relate it to existing works, to see why it is as it is—is one of the signs of a professional librarian and bibliographer. This requires not only hard work on the part of the student but attentive and critical guidance on the part of the teacher, so that ways of looking which will at first be over-systematic and stylised become second nature and duly flexible. In addition the teacher should be pressing the student to relate particulars and generalities, and thus both to enrich his

135

understanding of types of materials and to achieve that quick apprehension of the essence of particular works that has its roots in considered generalisation.

Attendant on all programmes of practical work is the risk that basic bibliographic operations may come to be regarded as mere technicalities. The selection of materials, annotating, abstracting, arranging items and indexing them—such operations can be found in bibliography courses but may lack the contextual element that alone gives them meaning.

A favoured way of attempting to resolve this problem is the compiling of bibliographies (or, possibly, the extended literature search). As an exercise—assuming it is well done and is not allowed to degenerate into the mere heaping up of titles through inadequate definition of intent—it does provide a specific context in relation to which operations must be formulated and skills practised.[41] (In at least one school it is fruitfully undertaken on behalf of teachers throughout the college, thus ensuring a degree of realism.) Along with associated essays on the materials used, problems encountered, etc, the compilation exercise has, in some schools, become the bulk of the bibliography course. Taken to this extreme it has, I think, been forced to bear an undue burden. For example, the arrangement and indexing of items may present few of the problems that students should be having to confront; annotating and abstracting may have little of their usual problematic nature because the world of users and documents is here, of necessity, highly specialised and homogeneous. In addition it has to be admitted that the sheer difficulties of supervision and the fact that students tend, whatever the sanctions, to present work close to extreme deadlines, means that important operations like abstracting and indexing get left to the end—too late for thorough instruction to be given. And this is also in the nature of the exercise which, quite rightly, stresses preliminary questions and is unable, whatever the boundaries conceded, to obviate the students' spending a great deal of time simply tracing and getting access to the required materials. (The drudgery of this last

136

is another reason for being wary of making too much of this exercise.) Finally, assuming that only one such project can be undertaken (and to require more would be to compound the problems without moving any way toward their resolution), the very real gains of comparative work are forfeited. For example, in such matters as annotating and abstracting, arranging and indexing materials, it is of value to have to consider the same items from the points of view of different users; while selection problems are illuminated by having to search bibliographies with a variety of users in mind. For some purposes at least it might be better to introduce appropriate comparative work and a variety of exercises rather than to try to force everything into the compilation programme. And I am quite sure that associated essays giving observations on the problems encountered and the tools used are, however perceptive, no substitute for the systematic study of bibliographic organisation.

This is hardly the place to attempt an exhaustive review of practical work. One of the areas that is being given increasing attention is that of mechanised searching. Among other exercises we find provide construction for SDI services, the writing of literature reviews, and book reviewing. Variety is, in principle, to be encouraged, but it might be argued that in this instance the range and very different weightings given to the various aspects of practical work are indicative of a failure to devise systematic programmes on the basis of carefully reasoned priorities. Finally, it will be readily appreciated to what extent the separation of indexing and bibliography reduces the effectiveness of practical work in both courses.

Notes and references

1 Roberts, A D *Introduction to reference books* 3rd ed. London, Library Association, 1956.

2 Shores, L *Basic reference sources: an introduction to materials and methods* Chicago, American Library Association, 1954.

3 Malclès, L-N *Cours de bibliographie* Genève, Droz, 1954.

4 Benge, R C and Dudley, E P 'The study of reference materials as part of library education' *Library Association record* 58(11) Nov 1956, 420-24.

5 Benge, R C *The study of reference material* London, Standing Committee on Education in Librarianship, 1956. (Notes for tutors)

6 Benge, R C 'The place of literature studies in library education' *Journal of documentation* 13(3) Sept 1957, 147-51.

7 Staveley, R *Notes on subject bibliography* London, Deutsch, 1962. (Circulated as duplicated notes for some years previously. Subsequently published as *Introduction to subject study* by R Staveley and others. London, Deutsch, 1967.)

8 Walford, A J (ed) *Guide to reference material* London, Library Association, 1959.

9 Paulin, L V 'The final revision of the syllabus' *Library Association record* 63(5) May 1961, 165-71. See also Needham, C D 'Reflections on List C' *Library Association record* 66(9) Oct 1964, 432-38.

10 Staveley, R *Personal viewpoints* London, University College London, 1964. (Occasional papers 13).

11 Staveley, R 'A theory for practical education in librarianship' *Journal of documentation* 28(1) March 1972, 1-10.

12 See, for example, Benge, R C *Bibliography and the provision of books* London, Association of Assistant Librarians, 1963.

13 Staveley, R *A theory . . .* (op cit), 8.

14 See, for example, Staveley, R *Notes . . .* (op cit) and Benge, R C *The place . . .* (op cit).

15 Larsen, K *National bibliographic services, their creation and operation* Paris, Unesco, 1953. (Bibliographic handbooks 1).

16 Shera, J H and Egan, M E (eds) *Bibliographic organisation* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951.

17 Bibliographic services in the social sciences' *Library quarterly* 20(2) April 1950, 79-100.

18 Ranganathan, S R *The five laws of library science* 2nd ed. Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1963 (1957).

19 Egan, M E and Shera, J H 'Foundations of a theory of bibliography' *Library quarterly* 22(2) April 1952, 125-37.

20 Cleverdon, C W, and others *Factors determining the performance of indexing systems* Cranfield, Aslib Cranfield Research Project, 1966. 2v in 3.

21 Lancaster, F W *Evaluation of the MEDLARS demand search service* Washington, US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1968.

22 Brittain, J M *Information and its users: a review with special reference to the social sciences* Bath, Bath University Press; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Oriel Press, 1970.

23 Pritchard, A *Statistical bibliography: an interim bibliography* London, North-Western Polytechnic School of Librarianship, 1969.

24 Pritchard, A 'Bibliometrics and information transfer' *Research in librarianship* no 19, vol 4, Jan 1972, 37-46.

25 Nicholas, D and Ritchie, M *Literature and biblio-metrics* London, Bingley, 1978; Hamden, Conn, Linnet.

26 Many such studies have, of course, been undertaken. Some are closely related to library housekeeping operations or planning (eg Urquhart, D J 'The National Central Library' *Journal of documentation* 13(1) March 1957, 13-31). Others are of wider reference (eg Price, D J de Solla *Little science, big science* New York, Columbia University Press, 1965).

27 Hall, A M *The use and value of citations: a state-of-the-art-report* London, Institution of Electrical Engineers, 1970. (INSPEC report no R 70/4).

28 Line, M B 'On the irrelevance of citation analyses to practical librarianship' (in: *EURIM II: a European conference on the application of research in information services and libraries, 1976.* London, Aslib, 1977.

139

29 See, for example, Machlup, F *The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962. Also 'Economics of information and information for economists' *International social science journal* 28(3) 1976 (whole issue).

30 National Research Council *Communications systems in the behavioral sciences* Washington, National Academy of Sciences, 1967. (Publication 1575). See also *Information storage and retrieval* 8(3-6), 1972. (Four articles largely on the work of Johns Hopkins University Center for Research in Scientific Communication).

31 Rogers, E M and Shoemaker, F F *The communication of innovations* 2nd ed. New York, Free Press, 1971. See also the extensive, though dated, bibliography Havelock, R G *Bibliography on knowledge utilisation and diffusion* Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 1968.

32 To take an example or two which have particular relevance to documentation: Znaniecki, F *The social role of the man of knowledge* New York, Columbia University Press, 1940; Boulding, K E *The image* Ann Arbor, Michigan University Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1956. In science see Kuhn, T S *The structure of scientific revolutions* 2nd ed. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970. On the sociology of knowledge from a librarianship point of view see Holroyd, G 'On the sociology of knowledge' *Journal of librarianship* 4(1) Jan 1972, 48-56.

33 Some of these issues are raised in the context of librarianship studies in Langridge, D W and Herman, E (eds) *The universe of knowledge* College Park, Md, University of Maryland School of Librarianship and Information Services 1969. (Student contribution series, 2); Langridge, D W *Classification and indexing in the humanities* London, Butterworths, 1976; Jones, K S and Kay, M *Linguistics and information science* New York, Academic Press, 1973; Hutchins, W J *Languages of indexing and classification* Stevenage, Herts, Peter Peregrinus, 1975. For exemplification of the potential range of studies see: McGarry, K J
140

Communication, knowledge and the librarian London, Bingley, 1975; Hamden, Conn, Linnet; and Kemp, D A *The nature of knowledge: an introduction for librarians* Bingley, 1976; Hamden, Linnet. In a subject field see Needham, C D *Reader in social science documentation* Englewood, Colorado, Information Handling Services, 1976.

34 See especially his *A theory . . .* (op cit)

35 Needham, C D 'The design of undergraduate courses in librarianship' (Paper delivered at a *Curriculum development workshop 1977*, Aberystwyth, College of Librarianship, Wales, to be published 1978.

36 Pollard, A W 'The arrangement of bibliographies' *Library* new series, vol 10, 1909, 168-87. (Reproduced as AAL Reprint no 2—London, Association of Assistant Librarians, 1950.)

37 Needham, C D and Herman, E (eds) *The study of subject bibliography with special reference to the social sciences* College Park, Md, University of Maryland School of Librarianship and Information Services, 1970. (Student contribution series 3).

38 Lancaster, F W *Evaluation . . .* (op cit), 185: 'Relevance to an information need is very different from relevance to a stated request'.

39 See, for example, Galvin, T J *Problems in reference service: case studies in methods and policy* New York, Bowker, 1965; also his *Current problems in reference service* New York, Bowker, 1971. For discussion of case-studies see Needham, C D 'Particulars and principles: case studies in librarianship' *Journal of librarianship* 2(1) Jan 1970, 56-70; and Galvin, T J *The case method in library education and in-service training* Metuchen, N J, Scarecrow Press, 1973.

40 Grogan, D J *Case studies in reference work* London, Bingley, 1967; Hamden, Conn, Archon; also his *More case studies in reference work* Bingley, 1972; Hamden, Linnet.

41 For further discussion of the compilation of bibliographies as an exercise see Needham, C D and Herman, E (eds) *The study . . .* (op cit).

141

The importance of management

B L REDFERN FLA

Note: This represents very much a personal view based on some twenty-two years of practice, most of which involved being concerned with the management of all kinds of human activity in libraries; and a further sixteen years of teaching in a library school, where there was great freedom to develop ideas and where I have been able to teach on a variety of topics, including management. No bibliography is given therefore because I have based my thoughts very much on my own experience. Naturally this has included a wide variety of reading, but it would be invidious to select certain titles as being more important than others.

MANAGEMENT is the most fundamental of human activities in the sense that every action in which human beings engage has to be properly managed if it is to come to a successful conclusion. Much of this is done subconsciously, as for example in driving a car, and the less obtrusive the management process the more likely is the activity to achieve its desired object. The best managers are those who are not seen to manage, but have absorbed the process into their inner being so that it has become seemingly a natural part of their way of life.

The present age appears to be obsessed with the processes of sexual intercourse. It is open to question whether more books have been written on sex than on management. I would suggest that many books on sex are concerned with the application of management principles to the whole art

of making love, although their titles may not suggest this, Nevertheless if two lovers are to achieve their desired state, each of them has to consider certain basic factors which could be labelled personnel management, use of resources and critical path analysis. Indeed if these are not carefully taken into account, frustration and disillusionment for one or both may follow. Tragically there is much evidence to suggest that human beings do engage even in this activity without due preparation.

This is where the difficulty lies, in that whatever the human activity may be, the management applied to it is not apparent when that activity achieves its highest level of creativity and satisfaction for all concerned. Thus when faced with the suggestion that they need to learn to be managers, many people will reply that they do not need to, either because it is a natural process and everybody knows how to do it instinctively or because they are not very good at it and are quite incapable of learning it. Whatever their reason, probable disaster lies ahead for them and for others who come within their span of activity.

In the liberal aura of tertiary education at the present time there is a tendency to assume that the student rather than the teacher has the right answers, and there are opponents to the teaching of management to student librarians who will say that the student here is correct. However, if the librarians in charge of those libraries which have achieved a successful service to their readers are asked how this is done, their answers, however expressed, can always be analysed to reveal the application of management principles to their work, in the proper use of resources aimed at prescribed objectives.

The importance of management, apart from the fundamental view so far considered, can best be appreciated in its relationship with the other two main areas of study for librarians—bibliography and indexing. Most librarians would regard one of these as their main concern and no one would wish to deny their importance in relation to the whole business of managing libraries. Nevertheless they are in

143

reality merely management techniques which have been developed by librarians for the organisation of stock and services. British librarianship has made a major contribution to the study of classification theory since 1945, but one of the dangers of this research has been that sometimes it has been conducted too far from the market place and has shown little awareness of the readers using libraries actually require. If on the other hand classification is seen as a management technique then the research is more likely to bear fruitful results which can actually be of some benefit to libraries and their users generally.

Cataloguers working in the remoter corners of a library sometimes lose sight of the basic function of the catalogue, which is to help somebody find something. They can become so involved in the niceties of choice of heading and bibliographical description that the basic function of the catalogue is forgotten. This point of view may possibly arise from the fact that management and indexing (cataloguing and classification) are taught in isolation from each other, and also that management is seen as something of an intruder into the rarified atmosphere of pure librarianship.

The teaching of bibliography has changed quite dramatically in recent years. It is no longer a question of learning by rote long lists of useless items of information about important reference books—knowledge which the young librarian probably found to be of little value in his daily work. Much more is it a matter of placing bibliography within the context of readers' needs for information. This is all to the good and must make the proposed closer link with management teaching the next logical step.

What is being proposed here is in no sense a downgrading in importance of bibliography and indexing, but rather that management provides a purposive link for the other two major studies. Any of the three is the handmaiden of the other two. Librarians of large or small libraries are all concerned with running libraries, that is they are concerned with managing their resources to the most effective advantage of

their readers. A vital role is played in this by the proper practice of several management techniques, two of the most important being indexing and bibliography.

Although links between subjects are beloved of course planners and educational theorists, in practice students seem rarely to make the connections unless they are carefully pointed out as a planned and integrated part of the teaching. It is important therefore that the syllabus is carefully arranged to reveal these connections. In discussing the necessity for having objectives and the careful advance planning needed to achieve them, the example chosen might be the need of a library to change its classification scheme. In this way comparative classification can be drawn into the discussion and various schemes examined for their merits in relation to the given situation. Critical path analysis could be linked with the planning of the change and time and motion study to the process of practical classification in the new scheme. It is possible that a librarian might consider a relevant factor in the choice of a scheme the speed with which items could be classified by it. Such a decision is surely a management one which can be demonstrated in the classroom, thereby teaching management and classification at the same time and showing their relationship.

Similar exercises can be developed in bibliography. Lack of money imposes choice in the acquisition of materials, but staff time is also an important financial consideration, and if reference tools are difficult to use because of ineffective organisation of their contents then staff time, to say nothing of readers' time, can be wasted in searching for information. Therefore comparative bibliography serves a useful management function in relation to budgeting. The new edition of *Grove's dictionary of music and musicians* will cost at least £600. What opportunity will librarians take to examine its effectiveness as a reference tool before they succumb to the need to keep up with the Joneses? An important element in the acquisition of reference stock now is the very high cost of such items. In the classroom the study of cost

145

effectiveness could be linked to the examination of bibliographies as effective tools for information retrieval.

These examples of how certain aspects of management, bibliography and indexing might be taught together in order to bring home to students how in a library all operations are inter-related, underline one of the difficulties of teaching management particularly. This is that all too often the student brings very limited experience to his studies and cannot see the relevance of much that is taught in college. It is only when, as a young professional, he is actually faced with a difficult member of staff that he is likely to see the full relevance of the case study on staff relations. Therefore some library school students object to much management teaching as irrelevant.

This can mean that valuable information and ideas have quite often to be discussed in an atmosphere of resentment. There is the feeling that time, which could be spent more usefully on special options often connected with the subject in which a degree has been gained, is being wasted. It has been noticeable that students returning to library school to complete a part-time BA after some years' experience in libraries have much greater interest and involvement in management studies than have students on the basic courses.

It could be that a much closer connection between management, bibliography and indexing in classroom exercises and case studies, as suggested above, would make management learning more vital and interesting. The alternative, in the current framework of library education, is that students should be required to have more library experience than most have at present before going to library school. A carefully planned training period in a library must be an essential part of such an approach and a pre-requisite for entry to a library school. This training should be integrated with the later studies at library school, so that the relevance of each to the other is apparent. At present there is enough evidence to suggest that when pre-library school training is received it is often given as a series of lectures in a classroom

146

training programme. Also the library schools should now be closely linked with libraries in their neighbourhoods as teaching libraries.

The problems facing teachers of library management so far discussed can be summarised as:

1 The opposition to any management course because of the feeling held by many people that management is instinctive and cannot be taught.

2 The lack of experience which many students have.

3 The lack of proper facilities for practical sessions in the exercising of management skills.

To these can be added the lack of really good textbooks, which take full account of all the developments in management study and relate them to the control of libraries. Until recently a further problem was that there were far too many management gimmicks and it was difficult to keep a clear head as the new theories and techniques rushed from the press, each rapidly replacing its predecessor. Now there is a more sanguine approach to the question of management, a greater willingness to look at problems and apply those theories and techniques which have been proven to work, rather than to be first in the field with the latest idea. In other words, management is shaking down into a reliable discipline of study and practice.

Some methods of teaching management have already been touched on above, but it will be useful to summarise them together here:

1 *Case studies* These are a useful method, particularly when the material for the study is drawn from a practical situation. They are especially relevant to the study of human relationships and, when incorporating rôle playing exercises, can help with the problems facing librarians who control staff.

2 *Management games* Like the case study these need very careful preparation. Often using computers they can simulate all kinds of management situations in libraries, where a series of decisions have to be made and a number of options

are posed at each decision. They can be applied to such items as budgeting, planning a new service, developing a loan policy, and acquisitions.

3 *Practical exercises* Frequently linked with 2 above, these can provide *experience in such skills* as flow charting, time and motion study, critical path analysis and planning and design of new buildings or service areas.

4 *Seminars* Sometimes these are used for exercises which properly belong with one of the earlier methods above, but they are best suited to discussion sessions where theoretical and philosophical questions are considered. Such discussions can be very arid when the students lack experience, and need very careful planning.

5 *Lectures* These should be avoided whenever possible. The pitfalls are well known. Most people stop listening after ten minutes or their attention begins to wander. *It is better to use one of the other methods described above or to refer the students to appropriate readings.* Ideally lectures should not be given to groups larger than thirty in number to allow for discussion.

Finally it might be useful to suggest the main areas of study which should be *covered in a management course* for a first qualification in librarianship. First of all something has to be said about the present position of libraries in the social structure of the country and about the basic nature of society. This of course affects all areas of study. Then should follow:

1 *User surveys* How do librarians find out what their readers or potential users want?

2 *Financial resources* Where does the cash come from? Methods of library budgeting.

3 *Planning* Programming the cycle of processes that pervade good management.

4 *Staff management* This is the most important area of study for the young librarian and must cover such things as human relations, *the law as it affects staff management*, newer methods of staff control such as team management, the effects of change on staff, timetabling, etc.

149

5 *Material resources* Selection, acquisition, storage, deployment, exploitation.

6 *Services* The development of all the above at the point where the readers actually make use of libraries.

The level of study of each of these areas must be appropriate to young librarians. The order of study can vary, and whichever order is used there will inevitably be reference forwards and backwards. Some or all of the methods of teaching can be applied to each area.

Librarianship is often an interesting and stimulating career. Its practitioners are useful members of society, providing a network of information and leisure services, which can solve problems, stimulate ideas and provide essential relaxation. These services will be the better for properly trained staff, who realise the essential role that good management plays and who are prepared to continue their education in further management studies. It is perhaps in continuing education, when the areas of study outlined above can be examined in much greater depth, that the wider connections of management with all other disciplines will be most apparent. Nevertheless the effort should be made at first qualification study to establish the relevance of bibliography and indexing to the proper management of libraries. At both levels all librarians must receive the kind of management education and training that enables them to cope successfully and resiliently with the processes of change which are a fundamental part of all human activity.

Chapter 11

Building a syllabus

ONE MIGHT THINK it impossible to write a chapter on the aims, structure and content of a librarianship syllabus without being defeated by the confusion in educational context which has been discussed earlier (see particularly chapter three). In a book which may be read in many countries of the world, an attempted distinction between first degrees, master's degrees and diplomas as first qualifications in librarianship is useless. A bachelor's degree, for example, means something quite different in aim and content in different countries. We are helped, however, if we turn from looking at the labels given to the various courses to the fundamental distinction between them. On the one hand there are courses, whatever they are called, which aim to give a vocational preparation: at the first qualification level to equip students with the competence to practise as professionals. On the other hand there are courses which in addition aim to enhance the student's general education. In Britain the former group is represented by the dying two year non-graduate diploma and the far-from-dying postgraduate courses, the latter by the bachelor's degrees, for no degree awarding authority in Britain would validate a degree which consisted entirely of conventional professional studies. The distinction I have made has been described by others as the difference between education *in* librarianship (the professional studies) and education *for* librarianship (the general educational background which a librarian should have). In practice, however,

the divide between the two concepts is not as unbridgeable as it seems in theory. Some professional studies, if suitably treated, can have considerable general educational value (I am thinking particularly of the organisation of knowledge), and postgraduate courses especially can make an assumption that the student already has a sound educational base which can be built on and developed.

Whatever the nature of the courses, they are likely to come under opposing scrutinies from the practising library profession and from academic authorities. It is almost a ritual for some librarians to castigate library schools as ivory towers dedicated to theory and lacking the sense of reality which matches library practice. In reply it must be roundly stated that schools of librarianship are quite properly concerned with theory if librarianship is not to revert to a morass of rule-of-thumb practice. Clearly the schools must not be out of touch with practice, but the expectation that students can be equipped at the schools to be competent in every practical and local detail in libraries is absurd. This indicates the popular confusion between library *education* and library *training*. Librarians, or pressure groups of librarians, sometimes ask the schools to give in their syllabuses inordinate weight to subjects which are their own concerns or even obsessions. While some of the requests are in themselves entirely reasonable, life (and a library school course) is short, and everything that everyone wants cannot be included. I remember requests that all public librarians should be fully competent in children's work, that all librarians should have detailed knowledge of computers and non-book media, and indeed that all librarians should be able to type . . .

Academic pressures are not as great as is feared by the practising librarian. Rarely if ever is a course materially inappropriate for the library profession because it had to gain acceptance from academic authorities. There is however at least potential danger where a high level academic institution does not fully understand professional needs: this could occur in a university or polytechnic, and the risk might be weighed

152

against the advantages of locating a school of librarianship in such an institution. (See chapter four.) Usually, however, the problems are minor and cosmetic, and consist of convincing colleagues from other disciplines on for example college course approval committees. There will be some subjects in a course which will be readily understood by outsiders and so will gain easy acceptance, thus facilitating acceptance of the whole proposal. Such a subject is history, so it may be a wise move to include history of libraries in a syllabus, and even to choose this subject for expansion in any proposal as an example of the content and treatment generally. Another study area which is in vogue and which would be agreed to have abundant study weight to justify its place in an academic programme, is that of computers. I have mentioned before, (chapter four) that science too is a readily understood and respected term, so that even the use of the word may be of benefit. 'Information science' as a label profits from an inevitable association of ideas, so apart from including suitably titled subjects in a syllabus, it may be a good ploy to entitle the library school 'School of Librarianship and Information Science'. Such superficial devices do have an influence on senior academics, government officials and others with the power of decision. 'Playing the academic game' in this way is no more than to take part in the political manoeuverings which are *essential in any field of life* if one is to attract acceptance, support, and finance.

The structure and content of courses are obviously heavily influenced by their aim. We would expect variations in these factors between the 'education in librarianship' and the 'education for librarianship' programmes distinguished above. Within these broad types there are differences too. In courses which serve general educational aims as well as those of professional preparation, such as first degrees in librarianship in Britain, there is a distinction between 'composite' and 'integral' degrees. The composite degree, as at CLW and the University of Strathclyde, includes librarianship as one of a number of subjects. The other subjects, drawn from other

university disciplines such as history, English, chemistry, have little connection with the librarianship studies and are taught outside the school of librarianship. The treatment of the professional studies may be somewhat conventional and the claim for the degree to have sufficient academic weight is largely based on the non-librarianship elements. The 'integral' type of degree on the other hand claims that all subjects within it may be described as librarianship studies if the term is widely defined, or are areas, fundamental or ancillary, which have a direct connection with it. As the name implies, there is an attempt to integrate the programme by various devices of timing and interconnection: thus the same subject specialisation may be applied to many areas of the course, and the student is expected, in his written work, to draw together various elements to demonstrate the integration. This kind of syllabus is far more difficult to compile than the composite type: not only is great ingenuity shown in syllabus construction, but the hard thinking which goes into planning is often the result of, and helps to evolve, an original and refreshing view of what librarianship is. But when all this is said, it must sadly be admitted that students do not always appreciate the integrated nature of their studies. They see the elements as separate and do not readily make the connections. Of course all is not lost, for a simple mix of subjects relevant to librarianship is useful. Since integration does not always work as intended, the composite type of degree, with subjects unconnected with librarianship, should not be thought to be necessarily inferior. Students certainly like them for they are partially a conventional academic degree whose standing and purpose can be readily understood. Composite degrees may also be popular with students whose alternative—or perhaps first—choice was a straight degree in say, history, but who could not, for some reason, pursue that course. Career possibilities are probably more open with a composite degree, but not all holders of integral degrees in librarianship go into library work. This is healthy. A degree in librarianship is the equivalent of any

other degree, and may therefore be used as a mark of academic competence, without necessarily confining a career to the subject matter of the degree. All history graduates do not become professional historians.

The courses described so far in this chapter have sufficient weight of professional studies to ensure that the student is competent to practice and that he can be recognised as qualified by the appropriate authorities. Problems in this respect arise when a somewhat smaller librarianship element is a contribution to other courses. An example is a qualifying course for school teachers. If librarianship is studied *within* this, what depth and duration of study is appropriate? Can the student claim qualified librarian as well as qualified teacher status at the end? The dilemma here is that a full double qualification would mean many years of study and might be thought inappropriate to the full-time teacher who has only marginal library duties. But is a shortened librarianship course feasible? Will not areas essential to library practice be cut down so much that they are useless? This longstanding problem can be solved only by appointing fully qualified librarians, with no teaching duties, to schools. This is possible only if schools are big enough to justify such appointments. Fewer problems occur when the library school makes a minor contribution to a modular general degree programme run by its parent institution, for here there is no intention of offering a professional qualification, although short modules could presumably be linked for this purpose. The aim is to give students an insight into the use of bibliographies, libraries, and other *information sources.* Unfortunately students do not always regard the librarianship element as an *important part of their studies,* but the *policy* of increasing all students' awareness of 'how to find out' is excellent. The department of librarianship at *Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic* offers an 'access to information' programme to any *other department willing to have it. Since we have mentioned modular courses, we may observe that whether or not the internal structure of a librarianship programme is modular*

155

is unimportant. Much will depend on local educational habit. The British favour several streams running side by side in the hope that integration will occur, but I have already expressed scepticism on the extent to which students benefit (page 154). Sequence is considerably less important than content, and indeed in any course planning many alternative sequences can be considered, but inter-relationships between subjects are so complex that none of them can be perfect.

The general structure of any librarianship course can be standard for all students, or it can allow in some way for a student's choice in his studies. Few courses are totally standard, for it is likely that at least the written work set will give a choice of topic, permitting the student to individualise his study to some extent. The degree of choice given depends not only on factors such as the size of the library school and the pattern of course which is acceptable to outsiders who judge it, but on the view taken of what the nature of the librarian's competence should be. The topics considered essential for every librarian to know will permit of no choice: these form the compulsory parts of courses. Other subjects may be interesting and educational, but peripheral and inessential; yet others will be specialisms wanted only by some librarians (hospital librarianship for example)— all these will form the area of choice. Note that choice can operate within individual subjects where it is appropriate. Thus in bibliography, while general problems of bibliographical organisation may call for a standard course, subject bibliographic structure may best be seen by the student if he investigates a subject of his own choice. There is probably little scope for choice within the field of library management, for most would agree that a general coverage is needed if the librarian is not to be unprepared for some practical library situations. But management could be studied within the context of a particular kind of library of the student's choosing.

Student choice can be provided for by offering a 'common core' of compulsory subjects together with a range of options

from which to choose, or by having a series of compulsory study areas within which the individual student can choose a slant throughout the whole, or can pursue a chosen topic. This latter arrangement suits the smaller school of librarianship which would be unlikely to have many students with the same interests. Obviously the larger school can also cater for individual study (it would be unwise not to do so) but it will find it sensible and economical to group into separate classes the teaching of subjects which are likely to be wanted every year by a sizeable number of students. *In other words it offers a choice of options, the number depending upon sufficient teachers with the expertise to teach them, what is considered to be reasonable bounds of interest to librarianship students, and the total number of students on the whole librarianship course.* If, for example, fifty students must take two options out of a choice of eight, then the average number of students in each option will be twelve or thirteen. This may be considered satisfactory, bearing in mind that numbers will in fact vary above and below the average. But if in the same example the total student numbers dropped to thirty then the average size of the optional classes would be only seven or eight: even if this figure is acceptable it would be likely that some options would attract only two or three students and may not be thought viable: indeed regulations imposed by education authorities may prohibit very small classes. The problem of the viability of options often confronts courses which do not reach the enrolment figures for which they were planned. A further, somewhat ironic difficulty is found in courses large enough to offer a wide range of options, as at PNL (see the sample syllabus in chapter twelve). Students have far more trouble in making a choice from a long rather than a short list, even though it may be thought that the former would match their interests more finely. Also they can feel very hurt if it becomes necessary to delete one or two in a particular year!

We have referred above to a 'common core' of compulsory subjects. Debates on library school curricula rarely challenge

the concept of a common core, and there is not a great deal of dissent, at least in Britain, on what in broad terms it should contain. Most would agree that although the names, content and treatment will differ, the following areas should be studied by all librarianship students at the first qualification stage (I give alternative names in brackets):

1 Bibliography (bibliographic organisation, systematic bibliography, subject bibliography, reference work, sources of information)

2 Cataloguing and classification (organisation of knowledge, indexing, information retrieval)

3 Library management (library organisation and administration)

My specialist colleagues have written about these subjects in chapters eight, nine and ten, and I will therefore make very brief my own justification of their place in the common core.

Bibliography is concerned with the materials librarians handle in the process of access to information. Whether a library worker is a specialist or a generalist, knowledge of sources of information is indispensable.

Cataloguing and classification is also a part of the access to information process, and there are arguments for putting it together with bibliography. Is not cataloguing a book an elementary form of bibliographical description? (But one must beware that a conceptual unity does not necessarily mean that a single teaching sequence will be satisfactory.) The major controversy concerning this subject in syllabus construction is how much weight to give it, bearing in mind the growth of centralised cataloguing, taking much of the work out of libraries. But as Derek Langridge points out, the intelligent use of catalogues is important, and there are still, and always will be, many library situations not served by national cataloguing agencies. The final justification is more academic. The subject analysis of a book, for classification or subject cataloguing in fact consists of making a judgement on where this small 'packet' of information,

experience or imagination fits into the overall map of universal knowledge. This is a highly intellectual process, and terms used such as 'universe of knowledge' or 'organisation of knowledge', though they sound pretentious, are fully justified. Furthermore, only the librarian (and perhaps the philosopher) has this task as his own, and it is the one part of his studies which is special to him. Library management is the discipline of management, widely applicable, but in this instance applied to libraries. Bibliographies are used by scholars and other non-librarians, but the organisation of knowledge can be seen as the centre of the librarian's expertise.

Library management, 'outside' applied discipline though it may be, seems of such outstanding importance that it is inconceivable that a common core could be without it. All librarians are managers to some extent, some are exclusively so. And yet courses have been constructed without a management element. The example which comes to mind is an information science syllabus, for it is sometimes held that the information scientist takes no part in the running of a library, but instead functions as an expert user of libraries on behalf of his fellow scientists. Assuming that management is included in the common core, a decision on its aims is important. Is it to prepare students for their first professional posts or for the top positions which they may eventually reach? Connected with this is the distinction between an emphasis on general management principles as they apply to libraries, and a concentration on specifically library problems and how they are solved, better described perhaps as 'library organisation and administration'. There is no reason why there should not be a mixture of the two.

Some courses insert a fourth subject into the common core, often named 'the library in the community' or something similar. Everyone accepts that a library's services can best be provided in the light of the known needs of the community it serves, and systematic surveys of the real and potential demand for libraries are becoming increasingly used. I would however prefer to see this essential material incorporated in

library management courses, where it has a natural place, rather than treated as a separate common core subject of equal standing with the three discussed above. To give a separate status encourages inflation: teachers have no difficulty in filling any time which is allocated to them. The effect might well be the introduction of too much undigested and indigestible sociology: undigested because it almost certainly would not be taught by trained sociologists (it might be disastrous for other reasons if it were); indigestible because some practically-minded librarianship students react against this kind of study. Furthermore in such a subject it is difficult to avoid a heavy public library bias, for the greatest problem in defining, surveying and reaching its community is experienced by the public library. It is the amorphous nature of the community at large which calls for the greatest study, and one suspects that those who advocate the inclusion of this area in library school curricula have mainly if not exclusively the public library in mind.

Having looked at the content of the common core we may now examine the make-up of the list of optional studies. A fairly full example of such a list is given in chapter twelve. Such a range can be offered only by a large school. One could quarrel with any particular example for the inclusion or exclusion of given subjects, but it is probable that any spectrum of optional studies would divide into subjects which are of interest to librarians but not of sufficient importance to be in the common core, and those which represent career specialisms. In the first category might be history of libraries, psychology of reading, modern book production; in the second children's librarianship, hospital librarianship, music libraries. Note that both groups may include options which are extensions of basic material included in the common core. Examples from the PNL syllabus in chapter twelve are introduction to administrative theory (building on library management), advanced indexing and retrieval (taking further the studies in organisation of knowledge), and computer applications in libraries (a short course for all students is held

160

early in the overall programme). A final point to make is that some subjects such as computers are 'other people's specialisms' and it is a matter of debate as to how much the librarian needs to know about such matters, and how far he can rely on the relevant experts when he is in his professional career. The same applies to other topics (law relating to libraries for example) which may not be found as separate options: this then is a further factor shaping the syllabus as a whole. It may be thought that these 'outside specialisms' can be provided by a library school by importing experts to teach them, thus extending the teaching range beyond the combined scope of the full-time staff. The idea is attractive, but it is vital that all studies are properly oriented towards library needs. As we have seen before (chapter five), teachers from outside often cannot make this orientation.

Chapter 12

A sample syllabus

I MAKE NO APOLOGY for describing here my own post-graduate diploma syllabus, although I hasten to add that I make no claims that it is better than any other. The simple reason for using it is that obviously I know it well. I chaired the group planning it and have been in charge of it ever since, so that I am aware of its aims, the calculations used in devising it, and how it has worked out in practice. I could not do this in such detail for any other course.

As a one year postgraduate programme it makes no attempt to include subjects whose sole or main purpose is the enhancement of general education. Its aim is to provide a professional education suitable as a first qualification in librarianship for graduates in other subjects. In common with the majority of British postgraduate courses it leads to a diploma, not a master's degree, but it is a diploma of high level. Some British schools have satisfied master's degree requirements by adding a short dissertation to be completed after the diploma studies are complete. This may be added to this PNL diploma in the future. In any event students generally agree that these professional studies do make enough intellectual demands ro be satisfying to graduates, and the fact that all students have a first degree should ensure that a fair level of general education has been attained. Also since most British first degrees concentrate on one subject, a useful focus for professional study is provided, for example in subject bibliography.

The syllabus consists of three compulsory subjects and a choice of four options from a list of twenty-eight. The

compulsory subjects are those discussed in chapter eleven and in the three specialist contributions by my colleagues. We have excluded the area of the library in the community from compulsory study on the grounds argued in the last chapter. Postgraduate students in particular do not have time in their course for a probably inflated fourth compulsory subject, and more than others they may resent half-baked sociology. It is more likely too that their own attitudes towards society are firmer than those of younger students. The very wide range of options is possible only in a school large enough to have enough expert teachers, and enough students, to make all options viable. The course was originally planned for an average of 120 students a year, and twenty-four options were offered, from which each student chose four. By the following calculation

$$\frac{120 \text{ students} \times 4 \text{ choices}}{24 \text{ options}} = 20 \text{ students per option (average)}$$

it can be seen that an average of twenty students took each option. Even allowing for wide variation from the average in individual options it was thought unlikely that any would be too big to accommodate or teach effectively, or too small to justify running at all. In practice variation is usually from ten to sixty, and the difficulties are usually at the upper rather than the lower end of the scale. With an increased size of the total course we were able to increase the number of options to twenty-eight, bringing in some interesting new areas of study (subjects thirty-five to thirty-eight). But we foresee that our course starting in January 1978 will be much smaller than in recent years because of the steep increase in fees imposed by the government, and so we have deleted four options (eleven, sixteen, seventeen and twenty-one) in an attempt to keep all the others viable. These particular four were chosen, as one would expect, for a variety of reasons. All attracted few students, and some were partially redundant, (for example twenty-nine is a subject now more appropriately included in our new second-qualification MA course). In two cases, (sixteen/seventeen and twenty-nine) the relevant teachers are leaving.

only two at one time. His total load at any one time in the course is therefore five, not seven subjects.

It is clear from what has been set out above that the options are much less heavily weighted than the compulsory subjects. Not only are they half the length in duration, but the amount of weekly effort expected of the student is less. The total weekly student load is calculated as follows. It is assumed that thirty-six hours a week will be spent in study, not including travelling and mealtimes etc, but including private study, writing essays, and preparation as well as time in class. The exact figure of thirty-six is chosen to aid calculation, but anything of the order of forty hours would be reasonable. Each of the three compulsory subjects should take eight hours, totalling twenty-four hours for the core areas, ie two-thirds of the student's effort. The options should require six hours work a week, and since only two are taken at any one time, the weekly total for options is twelve hours, one-third of the student's total weekly commitment. Thus each option represents a sixth of the weekly effort, and one-twelfth of the whole course since an option lasts for only half the year. In equation form the calculations are:

Weekly effort

3 compulsory subjects at 8 hours each	24 hrs
2 optional subjects at 6 hours each	12 hrs
Nominal total effort	36 hrs

Distribution of study effort over total course

3 compulsory subjects throughout course (8 units each)	24 units
4 optional subjects, each of half course length (3 units each)	12 units
Nominal total 'units' (the term is used only in this calculation)	36 units

Thus each compulsory subject represents 8/36 or 2/9 of the course (total compulsory area 24/36 or 2/3); each optional subject 3/36 or 1/12 of the course (total optional area 4/12 or 1/3).

It must be repeated that the above figures relate to total student load, not 'class contact' time. The time in class is

normally three or four hours weekly for each compulsory subject, and two for each optional subject. Some subjects call for little class contact, eg subject thirty-four, and also the later stages of subject bibliography when the student is largely working on his own topic. The total class contact is usually about fourteen or fifteen hours.

Assessment is in some subjects by written examinations, in others by assessment of course work. Two of the compulsory subjects have a mixture of the two methods. It will be noted that no 'early' options are assessed by written examinations. This avoids having two examination sessions during the course, and since so many of the total of thirty-one subjects are assessed on course work, there was no problem in practice in avoiding placing an examined option in the 'early' set. We have attempted to equalise the weight of assessment over the compulsory and optional areas to avoid unfairness and 'easy options'. An optional subject may be assessed either by a three hour written examination, or by essays to a total of 5000 words or other equivalent work. (Thus a subject may choose to set two essays of 2500 words, another a factual test and a practical project). Compulsory subjects are allowed three times the amount permitted to optional subjects. (In subject two for example, assessment is by one written examination, 5000 words in essays, and a series of practical tests).

In chapter seven I examined some problems of course work assessment. The difficulty surrounding resubmission of failed course work is made more acute in this course because of the division between early and late options. There is time for a failed early option to be retaken, but it is unfair to allow it for early but not late options (where the students have usually left before the marking is done). Also, the system of two 'end on' sets of options means that one has the embarrassment of continuing to teach students who know (for they are told the result subject to a final examiners' meeting) that they have already failed one or two subjects. All is not lost however, for the regulations permit marginal failure in one

subject to be condoned if the overall work is good, and a more serious fail in one subject can be redeemed by a resit in a later year. Apart from these concessions, a simple fifty per cent pass in all subjects is required: there is no aggregation of marks from differently weighted subjects to arrive at an overall pass mark. This kind of aggregation is however used to indicate candidates who may be considered for a 'mark of distinction' (less than five per cent of students gain this), but the lack of differential weighting of subject marks has the illogicality of making the options appear as important as the compulsory subjects. The examiners can however bear this anomaly in mind when exercising their discretion in permitting resits or condonement of fails.

Index

The following terms are not indexed unless also occurring in the text: a) terms in figure one, page 132; b) authors in the list of references, pages 137-41; c) names of subjects on page 163.